

Winter 2022/23  
Volume 1, Issue 4

# THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



## HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA



Left to right: Eric Squilla (Gulf-Keystar), Randy Sterling (KWH), City Commissioner Samuel Kaufman, Bill Horn (Architect for the Project), Monroe County Mayor Craig Cates, Joe Scarpelli (Architect's Project Manager), Dale Bitner (Truist Bank), Jay Hall (Truist Bank), Peter Batty (KWH), Amanda Pfeiffer (Gulf-Keystar), and Jeremy Moser (Gulf-Keystar)



Left to right: KWH Resident Commissioner Annette Mobley, KWH Chairman Johnny Parks, GK Project Manager Amanda Pfeiffer, & KWH Executive Director Randy Sterling



## Garden View Apartments—Topping Off Ceremony

On Friday, November 18th, contractor Gulf Keystar, A Florida Joint Venture, LLC hosted a "topping off" ceremony at the site of the under-construction Garden View Apartments - a brand new 103-unit deed-restricted affordable workforce housing development owned by the Key West Housing Authority (KWH). The event was held in honor of the subcontractors and their employees, thanking them for all their hard work.

At the time of the ceremony, construction of the residential property was over 70-percent complete, and the KWH expects to begin leasing units during Spring of 2023. Ninety-two of the units will be rented to households with a maximum income of 80-percent AMI, and the remaining eleven units will be rented to households with a maximum income of 25-percent AMI. Attendees included the contractor's staff, employees of the subcontractors, KWH Board Commissioners and staff, and local government leaders.

## HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE—October 15, 1999

In 1999, the Miami Herald newspaper reported on the beginning of the development of the Harry L. Bethel Roosevelt Gardens Apartments, a KWH-owned property comprised of 96 deed restricted affordable 1, 2, & 3-bedroom apartments constructed in 2004.

### Affordable housing planned for fairgrounds

Monroe County commissioners, acting as the Land Authority, on Thursday gave the fairgrounds property on North Roosevelt Boulevard to the Key West Housing Authority.

The Housing Authority plans to build about 100 rental units on the land, next to the Salt Run Channel. The units will be permanently affordable, with rent determined by income levels.

Development cost is estimated at

\$10 million to \$12 million.

County commissioners delayed until January consideration of a plan to change the way taxes are collected to fund the Monroe County Sheriff's Office.

Everyone in the county now pays the same taxes for the sheriff's office. But Key West has its own police department, which handles most local policing functions.

The commission is set to consider

splitting up the tax burden so those in unincorporated areas, where sheriff's deputies provide all local policing, would pay more.

Because of the approach of Hurricane Irene, commissioners also put off re-consideration of the controversial ban on vacation rentals.

That will be rescheduled for a special meeting, to be held in Marathon or Key West. No date was set on Thursday.

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## HOLIDAY SCHEDULE & IMPORTANT DATES

Christmas Day—December 25 (KWH Offices Closed on 12/23 & 12/26)
New Year's Day—January 1 (KWH Offices Closed on 12/30 & 1/2)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—January 16 (KWH Offices Closed)
First Day of Black History Month—February 1
Groundhog Day—February 2
Valentine's Day—February 14
Presidents' Day—February 20 (KWH Offices Closed)
Ash Wednesday—February 22
March 12—Daylight Savings Time Starts
Saint Patrick's Day—March 17

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The holidays are a time for celebration and togetherness, and it warms my heart to see tenants' decorations on their patios and balconies. This is not a time to think about something as scary as a home fire, but don't let your guard down just because it's a festive time of year.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, nearly 800 fires are caused every year by Christmas lights. One of the causes is triggered by "daisy-chaining" extension cords. This is when one extension cord is plugged into another extension cord. This is very danger-

ous—extension cords are not designed to work with other extension cords. Another cause of fire is overloading extension cords. Although an average extension cord has 5 or 6 outlets, its best to use only about half of the outlets. You never want to create a power overload which can cause sparks. Lastly, don't affix lights using staples or nails. You might damage the wiring, which can cause electrical shock or fire.

The holidays should be merry and bright. An ounce of prevention will allow us to protect our homes and keep our loved ones safe while also enjoying the holiday decorations.

In service,  
*Randy Sterling*

*"The magic thing about home is that it feels good to leave and it feels even better to come back." - Wendy Wunder, author of The Probability of Miracles*



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**Grisel George—Housing Supervisor**

Grisel has been with the KWHa for three years. Her position is Housing Supervisor for AMP 1 (George Allen, Lang Milian, Fort Village, and Robert Gabriel). She was born in Cuba & came to this country via Spain when she was 10 years old. Other than the 10 years in Cuba, & 4

years at the University of Miami where she majored in Health Care, she has lived in Key West.

Her favorite restaurant is? The Square Grouper on Cudjoe Key.

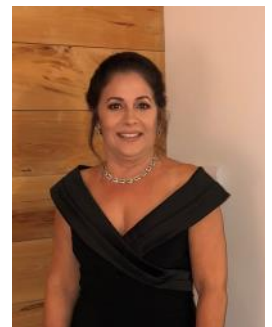
Do you prefer dogs or cats? Dogs. She has a 25-pound French Bulldog that she adores.

Hobby? Grisel loves boating, but specifically going to the islands like Snipes or Boca Grande on the weekends & hanging out with friends & family.

If you could change anything about Key West, what would it be? "I know we can't go backward, but I miss the small town feel of Key West. I used to go the supermarket & it would take me forever because of all the stopping & chatting. Since Key West has gotten so popular, I don't get the same feeling."

What is the best part about your job? "I like the interaction with our residents!"

Grisel has been married to her husband Jose for 11 years. Jose works for Liz Construction & does commercial lobstering in season. Her son Michael works for the FL Keys Aqueduct Authority.



## Free Classes

AT WILLIAMS HALL FOR  
HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS



### How to:

- 1 GO ONLINE TO [WWW.WILLIAMSHALL.ORG](http://WWW.WILLIAMSHALL.ORG)
- 2 CLICK CLASSES & EVENTS TO VIEW ALL UPCOMING CLASSES.  
PLEASE NOTE CULINARY CLASSES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE.
- 3 CLICK THE BLUE REGISTER BUTTON FOR THE CLASS YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN.
- 4 IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER IT WILL ASK YOU TO LOGIN.  
IF YOU NOT A MEMBER IT WILL PROMPT YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER IN ORDER TO REGISTER.  
MEMBERSHIPS ARE FREE!
- 5 ONCE YOU ARE LOGGED IN - FINISH YOUR REGISTRATION AND INPUT DISCOUNT CODE: KWHa2022  
(THE DISCOUNT CODE MUST BE IN ALL CAPS)
- 6 MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND ARRIVE ON TIME  
WALK! RIDE A BIKE! OR DRIVE TO WILLIAMS HALL, 729 FLEMING STREET  
SENIORS RIDE FREE ON MONROE COUNTY TRANSIT - CALL 305-292-4424 (PREFERABLY 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE).  
SPECIAL GROUPS MAY BE CREATED FOR SMALL GROUPS OF FRIENDS

PLEASE CALL MR. GARY YOUNG,  
HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENT ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR  
FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE. (305) 240-1334

[WILLIAMSHALL.ORG](http://WILLIAMSHALL.ORG)

Want a job like Grisel's? Check out the job opportunities on page 3 of this newsletter or on our website at [www.kwha.org](http://www.kwha.org)!





T. Murray Senior Citizen Complex.

The Housing Authority would like to thank **Will Langley of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Knight & Gardner Realty** for his generous cash donation of \$1,000.00. The money will be used to fund Latin dancing classes instructed by Lucy Carleton for residents of the Senior Citizen Plaza & the Jack

**BERKSHIRE  
HATHAWAY**  
HomeServices

Keys Real Estate  
Knight & Gardner  
Realty



#### 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 & assistance to its tenants, applicants, & landlords by employing & retaining a highly qualified & well-trained staff that supports its mission.

#### Current Employment Openings (as of 12/21/2022):

Maintenance Mechanic ( F/T)  
Med Tech (F/T) Poinciana Gardens  
Resident Activities Coordinator (P/T)

#### How To Apply:

To apply for a position with the KWH, 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:

Mary Martinez  
Human Resources & Risk Management  
Manager  
[MartinezM@kwha.org](mailto:MartinezM@kwha.org)

#### Via Postal Service:

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

#### Hand Delivery:

The Housing Authority of the City of  
Key West, Florida  
Administration Building  
Main Entrance  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040



## FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Key West Art & Historical Society, one of the oldest non-profit organizations in the Keys, donated 12 beautiful and uniquely decorated live Christmas trees to 12 deserving families of the Key West Housing Authority. The trees were decorated by local schoolchildren and the project was sponsored by local businesses and individuals.



## Children's Diapers & Baby Clothes Tax Holidays

July 1, 2022—June 30, 2023

The two tax holidays eliminate tax on the retail sale of children's diapers, including single-use diapers, reusable diapers, & reusable diaper inserts and on the retail sale of baby & toddler clothing, apparel, & shoes, primarily intended for children age 5 or younger.

**Manley  
deBoer**  
LUMBER COMPANY

The Housing Authority would like to acknowledge  
**Eric deBoer & Manley deBoer**  
**Lumber Company**

for a generous donation of a theater-style popcorn machine. The machine will be used by the thankful residents of the Senior Citizen Plaza to enjoy freshly popped popcorn during resident movie night.

## PEST CONTROL SCHEDULE



Fort Village—  
3rd 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

Senior Citizen's Plaza—  
4th Wednesday of each month

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

Do your part! Clean often: wipe down counters, sweep floors, take out the garbage, and keep food in sealed containers.

## LOOKING BACK

Fall was just as busy as ever! Below are just a few of the highlights of accomplishments:

- ◆ A white picket fence was installed around the entire perimeter of Robert Gabriel Site A.
- ◆ Staff opened the wait list for the Garden View Apartments.
- ◆ The KWHa hosted two Resident Meetings—one at the Senior Citizen Plaza and one at the Lang Milian Apartments. Attendees and staff were able to discuss many topics, including recent site improvements, plans for the future, and resident services. New staff and new residents were introduced and scores of comment cards were collected for staff to review and strategize solutions to the residents' recommendations.
- ◆ A concrete spalling repair and new balcony railings project was completed on a section of the 5-story building at the Senior Citizen Plaza.
- ◆ Staff served a traditional Cuban pork Christmas dinner to the residents of SCP. The dinner was well attended, and even Santa Clause showed up!
- ◆ The Board of Commissioners approved the FY 2023 budget, which includes line items for several major improvement projects.



## RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES WITH MR. GARY



Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, & Happy New Year to everyone! Join me in thanking our generous Community Partners who create free opportunities and activities for our residents and families throughout the year. Of course – none of this would happen without the full support of the KWHa Board of Commissioners and Executive Director, Randy Sterling.

Key West Art & Historical Society	Art Camp scholarships / Museums / Christmas Trees
Williams Hall	FREE classes for KWHa residents / 12 days of Christmas gifts
Basilica School of St Mary Star of the Sea	12 Days of Christmas
Key West Fire Department	Toys for Tots
Key West High School	Class Night and Band Concert tickets
Florida Keys Council of the Arts	Connections Project free art workshops
United Way of Collier and the Keys	Community Resources & county-wide entertainment opportunities for ALICE families
Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (AHEC)	Quit Smoking / Annual Health Fair
Gulf Atlantic Bank / Housing Authority	College scholarships for resident high school seniors
South Florida Symphony Orchestra	Tickets to the Symphony / Symphony in the Schools
Take Stock In Children	College scholarships for our high school seniors
Reef Relief	Coral Camp scholarships
Crane Point	Children's summer camp scholarships and field trips
MC Library in Key West & Marathon	Library services for seniors and field trip activities for children

**HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!** – Please call Mr. Gary for application information for Housing Authority 2023 Class Night scholarships.

It is always **OPEN ENROLLMENT** for our **FREE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM** at Lang Milian Apartments. Our after school program is Monday & Wednesdays from 3:45 to 7:00 pm. Elementary and middle school students receive assistance with reading and math, homework help, structured activities, computer lab access and healthy snack program.

I am sending A BIG THANK YOU to Senior Citizen Plaza residents who attended your ANNUAL meeting. I am also sending A BIG THANK YOU to FORT VILLAGE, ROBERT GABRIEL, GEORGE ALLEN and LANG MILIAN residents who attended your annual meeting. We are happy to share the GREAT things we are doing for YOU, and we WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. Thank you for your attendance.

### Gary Young Contact Info

Email: [youngg@kwha.org](mailto:youngg@kwha.org)  
Telephone: (305) 240-1334

Leave a message with your name, address, and phone number.