

Spring 2023
Volume 2, Issue 1

THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the

HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA



BUTTERFLY GARDEN PROJECT

Senior Citizen Plaza—1400 Kennedy Drive

The two large planters located on the west end of the courtyard at the Senior Citizen Plaza recently received a major makeover. The Trophia Butterfly Foundation and George Fernandez generously provided materials and staff to transform the previously overgrown areas into attractive spots where residents can relax and enjoy nature. Work included pressure washing, plantings of lirioppe, firebush, ixora, and ferns, and the installation of two stunning butterfly focal points, one for each planter. The Housing Authority and its residents are grateful for the generosity and look forward to enjoying the revamped outdoor space for years to come!



HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

Douglass Square Apartments—800 Emma Street

The Douglass Square Apartments, located at 800 Emma Street, were completed in 1991. The Key West Housing Authority owns the land and the apartments are owned and operated by a private company. The Developer agreed through a 1990 Land Use Restriction Agreement to provide at least 34% of the units for rental to very low-income persons or families for a minimum period of 25 years.

Wednesday, December 28, 1988

City strikes deal to build low-cost housing

By CHRISTINA CHEAKALOS

After haggling over the terms for two hours, the City Commission Tuesday struck a three-way deal with the Key West Housing Authority and a Wisconsin developer who wants to transform the dilapidated Frederick Douglass School into 50 affordable apartments.

Under the agreement, the city would buy Douglass School, located in Bahama Village, from the Monroe County School District for \$600,000. It would then turn over the property to the Key West Housing Authority, which would lease it to developer Peter Knap for 99 years.

"The money to buy the site and to build about half of the Myrtle apartment project will come from a \$2.3 million grant awarded to Key West

from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Developer Knap said he will get the remainder of the \$5 million he needs to build the project from state grants and loans.

In exchange for leasing Knap the \$2.3 million, the developer will build a community center on one-third of the property and the urgently needed affordable apartments.

Knap said he and the city had been trying to secure federal grants to develop Douglass School since the school district closed it four years ago. If construction does not begin by Sept. 30, 1989, the city could lose the grant money.

"This is a good combination of public and private enterprise, but it was exhausting,"

Developer Peter Knap

and local government partnerships in Wisconsin. "You have to have tremendous fortitude, the tenacity of a bulldog, the guts of a burglar and the hole of a rhesus monkey to get at a formidable project through this city, even though they need affordable housing."

Commissioners, lawyers for the city and Key West Housing Authority, the city planner and manager and the developer debated the terms of the agreement for about two hours Tuesday before Mayor Richard

Heysen called a two-hour recess. When the meeting was reconvened, the commission voted unanimously to allow City Manager Richard Walter to represent the city in the agreement.

For the next 25 years, 17 of the one, two and three-bedroom apartments will be rented according to federal HUD guidelines, and the remaining 33 units will be priced no more than 15 percent above the city's rent ceilings under the Growth Management Ordinance.

Both the federal and city guidelines are based on median family income. Rents under the GMD are much higher. For example, under the GMD, a one-bedroom apartment can be rented for up to \$454, while the maximum rent for the same apartment under HUD guidelines is \$250. A two-bedroom apartment under the GMD can be rented for \$742, while a HUD two-bedroom apartment rents for \$355.

From the 26th to the 99th year, all of the 50 units will be rented at the city's GMD rent guidelines. As for the community center, Knap has agreed to rebuild the gymnasium which will include a kitchen, locker rooms, a cafeteria and 27 parking spaces. He also will build a building which the city can rent. There will be space for an elderly center and children's day care.

The Key West Housing Authority will monitor Myrtle to ensure that federal guidelines are being followed. The community center would be run by the Neighborhood Improvement Association, based in Bahama Village.

Knap must pay back half the grant money during over a 25-year period, beginning 17 months after the first apartment is ready for occupancy. He'll get the money from rents and from a 5,000 square-foot commercial area, which may include a Laundromat and convenience store.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Ramadan—	March 22-April 20
Palm Sunday—	April 2
Good Friday—	April 7
(KWAH Offices Closed)	
Easter Sunday—	April 9
Taxes Due—	April 18
Earth Day—	April 22
National Day of Prayer—	May 4
Mother's Day—	May 14
Memorial Day—	May 29
(KWAH Offices Closed)	
Fathers' Day—	June 18
Juneteenth—	June 19
(KWAH Offices Closed)	

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The staff of the Key West Housing Authority and I are dedicated to providing quality affordable housing and exceptional customer service to all of our residents.

Recently, numerous improvements have been made to the Lang Milian Apartments, Fort Village, Robert Gabriel Apartments, the George Allen Apartments, and the Senior Citizen Plaza. A bit of "Spring Cleaning," you can say. Work included repairs to fences, exterior painting of buildings, doors, and trim, repairs to balcony rails, new

signage, repairs to pot holes and cracks in sidewalks and driveways, and new landscaping. I hope that some of you have noticed the property enhancements and that you enjoy them. Staff has worked incredibly hard these past few months to make these changes possible and I am very grateful for their commitment to the Authority. They are truly the backbone of the KWHa.

Please enjoy this Spring issue of our newsletter and hopefully you find the information entertaining and useful.

In service,
Randy Sterling

"No Act of Kindness, No Matter How Small, Is Ever Wasted." Aesop



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Kenya Strachan—Housing Manager

Interview by Peter Batty

Kenya started as a training assistant in administrative support & she is now the Affordable Housing Manager. She says that she sees a recent change at the Housing Authority and that she feels that the company culture nurtures relationships with other employees and residents. Kenya has two grown children, and says that she is blessed that both of them live right here in Key West.



Free Classes

AT WILLIAMS HALL FOR
HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS



How to:

- 1 GO ONLINE TO 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

Where are you from? *I am from Mississippi originally. I came to Key West in 1991 to visit relatives & I got stuck here due to Hurricane Andrew. I knew right away that Key West was the place for me because of the small town feel & friendly people.*

How many years have you been with the KWHa? *30 years.*

What do you like about your job? *I really like interacting with the residents and helping them with their housing needs.*

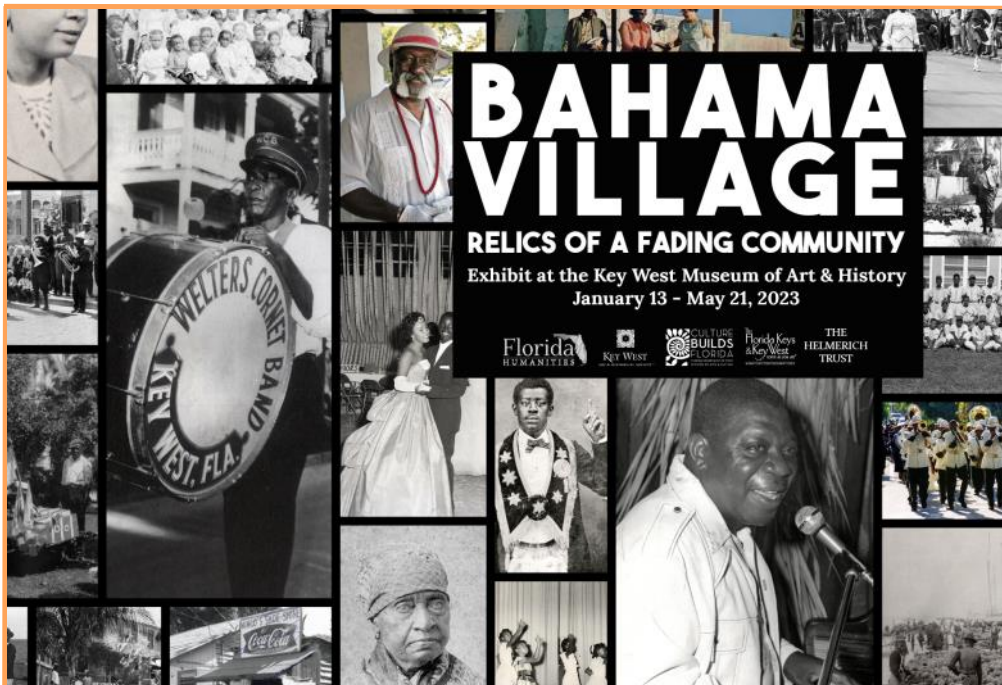
What is your favorite restaurant? *Currently, I really like El Habanero!*

Do you prefer cats or dogs? *I am currently between pets right now, but I love both. When I was younger, I wanted to become a veterinarian.*

If you could change anything about Key West, what would it be? *I know that our tourists are an essential part of our economy, but maybe just a few less visitors would help bring back that small town feel.*

What are your hobbies? *I like reading, cooking, dancing, and traveling.*

Want a job like Kenya's?
Check out the job opportunities on page 3 of this newsletter or on our website at www.kwha.org!



The **Key West Housing Authority** would like to recognize the **Key West Art & Historical Society's** talented and friendly staff & board of directors, who are responsible for such an important and vital organization that preserves the history and culture of Key West. The Free Admission that was extended to our residents and employees to view the "Bahama Village—Relics of a Fading Community" exhibition was incredibly generous, thoughtful, & well received.

Thank you!!!



Pictured Above: KWAH Commissioner Annette Mobley posing with an exhibit showing her as a young girl in Bahama Village.

Children's Diapers & Baby Clothes Tax Holidays

Ends 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.



Pitch In!

PUT TRASH
IN ITS PLACE



The Housing Authority says **THANK YOU** to all the **CHILDREN** in our communities who take pride in the community where they live. **WE SEE YOU** picking up trash, **WE SEE YOU** putting trash in the trash containers & **WE SEE YOU** putting household garbage bags inside the dumpsters. **WE ARE SO VERY PROUD OF YOU!** **THANK YOU** for helping us keep our communities clean!



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 03/20/2023):

- Grounds Caretaker (F/T)
- Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) / Section 8 Specialist (F/T)
- Maintenance Mechanic (F/T)
- Med Tech (F/T) Poinciana Gardens
- Resident Activities Coordinator (P/T) Poinciana Gardens

How To Apply:

To apply for a position with the KWAH, 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:

Mary Martinez
Human Resources & Risk Management
Manager
MartinezM@kwha.org

Via Postal Service 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

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 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

Winter was an exciting season at the Housing Authority! Below are just a few of the highlights:

- ◆ Major tree trimmings happened at the George Allen Apartments, Senior Citizen Plaza, Robert Gabriel Site A & Site C, Jack T. Murray, & Roosevelt Gardens.
- ◆ A substantial amount of progress was made at the new Garden View Apartments on College Road and staff expects to start leasing apartments by summer.
- ◆ The buildings at Robert Gabriel Sites A, B, and C were pressure washed and painted with colors approved by the Historic Architectural Review Committee.
- ◆ New property signage was installed at Robert Gabriel Sites A, B, and C.
- ◆ New landscaping was installed at Robert Gabriel Site C, at the corner of Whitehead and Petronia.
- ◆ The Trophia Foundation completed a stunning renovation of the butterfly garden in the courtyard of the Senior Citizen Plaza.
- ◆ The Board of Commissioners authorized staff to issue an RFQ for a Developer Partner to assist with the redevelopment of the Lang Milian Apartments.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES WITH MR. GARY

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: The application deadline for vocational and college education scholarships is **April 10, 2023 by 5:00 p.m.** – Eligible

students who live in Housing Authority communities may apply for TWO different scholarships: The Housing Authority Class Night Scholarship AND the Housing Authority collaborative scholarship with Gulf Atlantic Bank. **DON'T WAIT!** Call Mr. Gary today to apply.



Residents from the Jack T. Murray Senior Complex, the Senior Citizen Plaza, and Poinciana Gardens Senior Living Complex enjoyed Arts & Cultural events through our community partnerships. We'd like to thank the Florida Keys Council of the Arts, United Way of Collier & the Keys, South Florida Symphony Orchestra, Impromptu Classical Concerts at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, & Monroe County Social Services. Their kindness made it possible for our seniors to attend and receive transportation to the Symphony, String Quartet, American Band & Wind Ensemble concerts.



Senior Citizens from Jack T. Murray Senior Complex and Poinciana Gardens Senior Living Complex are always invited to attend activities and classes at the Senior Citizen Center Auditorium. Events include Bingo, Dancercise, Fitness, Chair Yoga, Salsa Dancing with Lucy, and screenings of movies. Call Mr. Gary for the monthly calendar.

Now is the time for OPEN ENROLLMENT for our FREE AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM at Lang Milian Apartments. Our after school program is Mondays & Wednesdays from 3:45 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Elementary and middle school students receive assistance with reading and math, homework help, structured activities, computer lab access and healthy snack program. The program continues throughout SUMMER BREAK when we also take field trips and offer Summer Camp scholarships to Key West Art and Historical Society ARTCAMP! and Reef Relief Coral Camp. Please call Mr. Gary for information!

While supplies last, FREE Toys for Tots gifts are available upon request to parents with young children and elementary school children. Please call to schedule a time to see and pick up toys.



Gary Young Contact Info

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

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