



Spring 2022  
Volume 1, Issue 1

# THE KeyWester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



**HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA



## GARDEN VIEW APARTMENTS

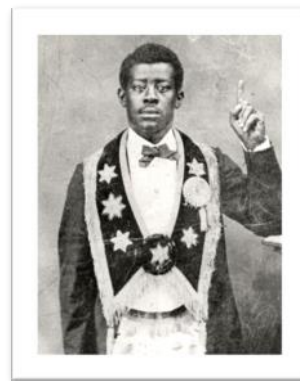
Most of us recognize that one of the greatest challenges for our island community is the lack of affordable workforce housing. In keeping with tradition, going all the way back to 1938, the Housing Authority continues to lead the way in developing new opportunities to help resolve the housing crisis.

Currently under construction is the Garden View Apartments complex on College Road. Situated on the old Easter Seals and SCPA sites, the completed project will feature one hundred three (103) 1-bedroom/1-bathroom apartments. Rents will vary from extremely low-income (25%) to low-income (80%) of Area Median Income (AMI). This beautiful complex should be ready for occupancy mid 2023. A waiting list will become available when we get closer to completion.

This project would not have been possible without the strong leadership of the Housing Authority Board and our strategic partners: the City of Key West, the Monroe County Land Authority, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

## HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

Robert Gabriel represented Monroe County in the Florida House of Representatives in 1879 and served four years on the Key West City Commission (1905-1909). In addition, he was employed as a United States customs inspector. Mr. Gabriel resided in the Bahama Village Neighborhood and lived at 1125 Thomas Street until his death on October 18, 1922. The Robert Gabriel Apartments were named for him by the Key West Housing Authority in 1958.



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### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- Good Friday—April 15th  
(KWA Offices Closed)
- Mother's Day—May 8th
- Memorial Day—May 30th  
(KWA Offices Closed)
- Father's Day—June 19th
- Juneteenth National  
Independence Day—June 19th  
(Observed on June 20th)  
(KWA Offices Closed)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the very first issue of our brand new seasonal newsletter! I am excited to introduce this additional method of communication for our residents. Each issue will include the following segments:

- A Front Page “Big News” Story
- A Bit of Key West History with a KWHA Connection
- Message from the Executive Director
- Message from the Director of Housing
- Employee Spotlight
- Job Opportunities
- Mr. Gary’s Corner

The newsletter will also include pertinent information like the

pest control schedule, upcoming major maintenance projects, and a holiday schedule, but also fun stuff like residents’ & employees’ favorite recipes, upcoming community events, and healthy & happy lifestyle tips.

There will also be seasonal information like scholarship opportunities and public housing annual plan events.

We plan to publish a new issue with the start of each new season (spring, summer, fall, and winter). Issues can be found in print at all rental offices and also in a digital format on our website at [www.kwha.org](http://www.kwha.org).

We welcome and encourage you to share your ideas for content for future newsletters. Just let us know! Thank you for all you do to support your local housing authority and its mission.

In service,

*Randy*

*“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” - MAYA ANGELOU*

### FROM THE DESK OF CHANDRA TYNES— DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

I would like to start by saying how grateful I am for all the hard work from our staff during the worst pandemic in over 100 years. I would also like to thank all of our residents who have cooperated in this most difficult of times. Hopefully COVID will be less of a threat in the future, but we must all remain vigilant.

In my 27 years with the Housing Authority, I have seen many changes, but the last year has been truly remarkable. Many sites have undergone improvements such as landscaping, dumpster enclosures, painting, fencing, and countless other upgrades. I am happy to report that we aren't about to slow down and there are more upgrades in the pipeline for the upcoming months.

We all take pride in our little island community, and I urge all of residents to take pride in their homes.

Take care of yourselves and each other,

*Chandra*



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Paulette Rivas



*Photo of Ms. Rivas at the beach.*

Interviewed by Peter Batty

Paulette says she enjoys working at the Housing Authority because it has given her the ability to help people and to establish and maintain strong relationships with many of our residents. In October she will reach an impressive 30 years of employment! She says she has seen many changes with the agency over the years and she is happy to report that they are very positive changes. Paulette has fostered a child for over 14 years and the two of them enjoy attending church together and watching TV at home. She also has an adult daughter.

Where are you from? *I am a proud 4th generation Key West Conch—born and raised. I received my education from Florida Keys Community College and Florida A&M University.*

How many years have you worked at the Housing Authority? *Twenty-nine.*

What position do you hold? *Maintenance Controller, but I started with the Housing Authority as a receptionist.*

What are your favorite restaurants? *Harpoon Harry's for breakfast and lunch, Abbon-danza Italian Restaurant for dinner.*

Do you prefer dogs or cats? *Small dogs!*

Name one of your hobbies. *I like dancing and cooking, but I LOVE happy hour!*

If you could change anything about Key West, what would it be? *I would like to see more activities for children!*

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



Hand holding a broom and the words "Spring Cleaning"

## SPRING CLEANING

The occasional chilly days are gone, flowers are in full bloom, and the locals are back to swimming at the beach. Its springtime in Key West!

One of our favorite ways to say goodbye to winter and to welcome in the new season is to take part in the tradition of **Spring Cleaning**. It can sometimes feel like a challenging mission, but it doesn't need to be. There is no rule that it needs to be done all at once!

Here are some tips to get you started:

### Get help.

Spring cleaning benefits everybody in the household, so everybody that can participate should. Even the littlest members of our families can join in with age-appropriate tasks. Make it fun! Put on some music to dance to while vacuuming. Add a reward as an incentive to motivate family. Cleaning can also be great exercise.



Pail with cleaning items including gloves, spray bottle, towels, dust pan, and scrub brush.

### Eliminate clutter.

Less stuff owned equals less stuff to clean. One of the first things to get your spring cleaning mission well on its way is to look in every room and find items that should be thrown away, recycled, or donated. Don't forget to check drawers, cabinets, and closets. This will free up space for items to be put away and out of sight! Also throw out any expired or otherwise compromised food.

### Start at the top.

Its best to work your way down when cleaning. Start with dusting of ceiling fans, top of refrigerator, and tops of cabinets. Next can be window blinds and window AC units. Then dust all hard surfaces. Floors should always come last.

### A place for everything and everything in it's place.

Every item we own should have somewhere to be stored and should be returned there when not in use. Living by this rule will help maintain an orderly home.

### Establish a new routine and new good habits.

A thorough cleaning of the entire home is a great clean slate and fresh start to establishing new cleaning habits. Get in the habit of tidying up for 10 or 15 minutes each day and next year's spring cleaning will be easier.



## 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, and landlords by employing and retaining a highly qualified and well-trained staff that supports its mission.

### Current Employment Openings:

- Custodian—F/T—Poinciana Gardens
- Director of Human Resources & Risk Management—F/T
- Food Service Manager—F/T
- Maintenance Mechanic—F/T

### How To Apply:

To apply for a position with the KWHA, submit a completed Application for Employment, a completed Criminal-Traffic Background Authorization Form, and a signed job description for the position you are applying for.

### Via Email:

Kathy Wright  
Director of Human Resources and Risk Management  
[WrightK@kwha.org](mailto:WrightK@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



## 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—  
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

Reflecting on 2021, it was certainly a year for the record books. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was one of the top news stories, but fortunately most of us came through it okay. We said goodbye to longtime Executive Director Manuel Castillo and welcomed our own Randy Sterling to that position. Even with the pandemic raging, the Housing Authority was able to complete nearly 100 improvements to its properties and to the administration of the programs. Below are some of the highlights:

- ◆ Introduced a new logo and launched a brand-new ADA compliant website: [www.kwha.org](http://www.kwha.org).
- ◆ Hired an arborist for a major tree trimming and removal of invasive species at KPA, KPB, Lang Milian, and Fort Village.
- ◆ Painted the lobby and common areas of the Senior Citizens Plaza. Repainted the exteriors of the Lang Milian and George Allen Apartments.
- ◆ Modified and expanded pest control contracts for all five public housing developments and at the Jack T. Murray Senior Citizen Complex.
- ◆ Installed Dumpster enclosures at George Allen and Lang Milian Apartments.
- ◆ Started construction of the new 103-unit affordable housing property on College Road, known as the Garden View Apartments.
- ◆ Secured funding from both the City of Key West and Monroe County to continue operations at Poinciana Gardens, assuring continued assisted living and supported housing for our seniors.
- ◆ Rebuilt the elevator shaft and replaced a portion of the roof at SCP.
- ◆ Secured an additional 28 Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8).

Although 2021 was busy, we have a lot in store for 2022. A few major projects in the works right now include brand new kitchens for 49 units of the Robert Gabriel Apartments, new perimeter fencing for the sides and front of the George Allen Apartments, and new playground equipment for the Robert Gabriel Apartments—Site C and the Lang Milian Apartments (open to all public housing residents).

## RESIDENT ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH MR. GARY

Welcome to Housing Authority's **NEW**letter for Spring 2022. This section of our seasonal newsletter is where you will hear about Activities and Opportunities that Mr. Gary coordinates for Housing Authority resident families, children, teens and senior citizens. In addition to free programs sponsored by the Housing Authority, our generous community partners work with us all year long to offer opportunities for you. For more information, please email Mr. Gary directly at [youngg@kwha.org](mailto:youngg@kwha.org) or call Mr. Gary at (305) 240-1334. Please leave a complete message with your full name, address and telephone number.

Mr. Gary coordinates the **Housing Authority's free afterschool children's program** on Mondays and Wednesdays. Our after-school classroom is located at our Lang Milian Apartment complex, 301 White Street, unit 13-G. Enrolled children arrive after school to enjoy a safe, structured and fun program. Mr. Gary provides homework assistance, educational guidance, structured play activities with a focus on good-sportsmanship, field trips and healthy snack program. Children are encouraged to make positive choices, individually, and as a group. Space is limited and enrollment is required.

Our children's program operates all year long, during school breaks, and summer. Through the generosity of our community partners, children may be eligible to attend **free week-long summer camp adventures through scholarships** sponsored by the Key West Art and Historical Society's *ARTCAMP!* and Reef Relief's *Coral Camp*.

Housing Authority families who participate in the **SNAP program** are invited to participate in the **Museums for All program** at the Key West Art and Historical Society. Admission is free at all KWAHS museums; the Custom House, Key West Lighthouse, Fort East Martello Tower, and the Tennessee Williams Museum. For more information go to this link <https://museums4all.org/>

High school seniors, who seek higher education after high school, may be eligible to apply for a **Housing Authority Class Night Scholarship award**. This year, the Housing Authority is also very pleased to offer a NEW collaborative scholarship award with the Gulf Atlantic Bank. Eligible students who want to apply may call Mr. Gary for details and guidance.

In addition to providing community service information to senior citizens in our communities, Mr. Gary is working on special opportunities with our community partners for free senior classes and activities. Please call Mr. Gary for more details!