

SPRING 2024  
Volume 3, Issue 1

# THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



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

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## IMPORTANT DATES

- Good Friday—March 29  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- Easter Sunday—March 31
- Tax Day—April 15
- Passover (first day)—April 23
- National Day of Prayer—May 2
- Mother's Day—May 12
- Memorial Day—May 27  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- Father's Day—June 16
- Juneteenth—June 19  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**

**Tax Prep Time!**

## Tax Day is April 15!

How to find out if you need to file a federal tax return



You can determine if you are obligated to submit a federal tax return by utilizing an Interactive Tax Assistant (ITA) tool provided by the IRS. The tool can be accessed at [www.irs.gov/help/ita](http://www.irs.gov/help/ita).

You might be exempt from filing a federal income tax return if your earnings fall below a specified threshold. Taxable income includes not only wages from employment but also retirement and disability benefits.

Even if your income falls below the filing threshold, you still have the option to file a return, enabling you to claim possible refundable tax credits or receive a tax refund.

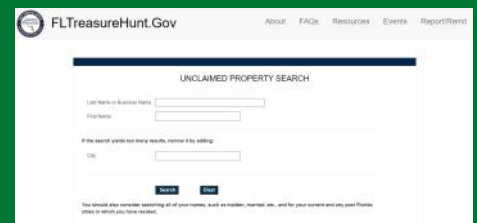


## Could you have unclaimed funds from a forgotten financial account?

Find out today by visiting [www.FLTreasureHunt.Gov](http://www.FLTreasureHunt.Gov)



Unclaimed property is a financial asset that is unknown or lost, or has been left inactive, unclaimed, or abandoned by its owner. If the owner of the asset cannot be located so the asset can be returned, it is reported and sent to the Division of Unclaimed Property of the Florida Department of Financial Services. These accounts are available in a searchable database, free of charge, allowing claimants to initiate a claims process for accounts they believe they are entitled to. Visit [FLTreasureHunt.gov](http://FLTreasureHunt.gov) to search for unclaimed property.



## HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

Lang Milian Appointed to Serve on Housing Authority Board

On September 2, 1966, the Miami Herald Newspaper reported that then Mayor Kermit Lewin announced that he had appointed Mr. Lang Milian to the Board of Commissioners of the Key West Housing Authority. The paper reported that Mr. Milian was a Civil Service employee at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station. The appointment was a fulfillment of a promise made by Mayor Lewin at a commission meeting held in April of that year.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Monroe County Housing Authority, a partner of the Key West Housing Authority, is now accepting applications for the Monroe County Scattered Sites—Conch Key, a brand new housing development of eight (8) 1-bedroom/1-bathroom and two (2) 2-bedroom/1-bathroom single-family houses currently under construction on Conch Key. A maximum of 100 applications will be randomly selected and then numerically sorted by

lottery. The application deadline is **Tuesday, April 30, 2024, by 4:00 p.m.** The entire public notice can be found in the March 19th edition of the Keys Citizen or online at [www.kwha.org](http://www.kwha.org) under “Recent News.” Please share this exciting news with anybody you think may be interested. Thank you for helping our Housing Authority partner spread the exciting news!

In service,  
*Randy Sterling*



**“We can start with housing, the sturdiest of footholds for economic mobility. A national affordable housing program would be an anti-poverty effort, human capital investment, community improvement plan, and public health initiative all rolled into one.” -**

Matthew Desmond, American sociologist and Pulitzer Prize winning author of the book, *Evicted*.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

*Ms. Ana Roca*

**Housing Choice Voucher Program Manager**

*Interview by Peter Batty*

After graduating from high school in Nicaragua, at the age of seventeen, Ana came to Key West to live with her mom. She attended Key West High School for her junior and senior years and has the distinction of having two high school diplomas. Ana lives in Poinciana Plaza with her husband, Alberni. They have been married for twenty-one years and have three sons: Samuel (18), Nathan (15), and Valentino (2). Ana is the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program Manager.

*How long have you been with the Housing Authority?* I have worked for the Housing Authority for five years. I have always worked in the Housing Choice Voucher program. I started as an assistant and became a specialist, and now I am very fortunate to be the manager.

*What do you like about your job?* The people I work with are very dedicated to what they do, and there is a lot of friendship as well. I really like my co-workers. But the best part of my job is the ability to take care of others. The Housing Choice Voucher program keeps families together, offering stability, and allowing people to live in the Florida Keys. In the coming year, I am looking forward to traveling to Marathon and Key Largo to meet with clients.

*What are your hobbies?* My hobby is taking care of my three very active boys.

*Does your family have a favorite restaurant?* We mostly eat at home but occasionally go out. When we do, it is usually to Big John’s Pizzeria. My family really likes that place.

*In the 25 years you have lived in Key West, have you seen many changes?* Yes, many changes. The traffic has increased a lot, and the cost of things in Key West, like groceries and gasoline, has become very high. But I feel very fortunate to live in Key West and the United States.

**Our heartfelt gratitude to our  
community partners  
for their invaluable support  
of the Key West Housing Authority  
and its residents.**

**Your dedication uplifts our  
community in  
countless ways.**



**thank you**

just to name a few....

Anne McKee Artists Fund

The Basilica School of Saint Mary Star of the Sea

Bill Lay & Darren Horan & La Trattoria

City of Key West Community Pool

Danny Hughes & Two Friends Patio Restaurant & Pepe's Cafe

Ed Swift

Edward B. & Joan T. Knight Foundation

Erik deBoer

Fausto's Food Palace

Florida Keys Council of the Arts

Gulf Atlantic Bank

Historic Tours of America

Key West Impromptu Classical Concerts

Key West Art and Historical Society

Key West Fire Department

Key West Police Department

Mel Fisher Maritime Museum

Monroe County Public Library

Monroe County School District

Monroe County Sheriff's Office

Monroe County Social Services

Pak Mail and U-Haul Key West

Publix Super Market

Reef Relief Coral Camp

Truman Waterfront Park

United Way of Collier and the Keys

Waterfront Brewery—Arcade

Will Langley & Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

Williams Hall



## THE RISKS OF FEEDING WILD CHICKENS

The sight of feral chickens roaming freely has become a famous characteristic of Key West's charm. For some, these colorful and entertaining birds add a touch of quaintness to our island's atmosphere.

However, providing food to these chickens can have significant consequences for both the birds and our community as a whole. In fact, in 2021, our mayor and city commissioners passed an ordinance (City Code Sec. 10-11) making it unlawful!

Feeding feral chickens disrupts their instinctive foraging behaviors. They are incredibly resourceful and are experts at finding food on their own, but when they become reliant on regular handouts from humans, they lose the ability to hunt for insects and seeds, which are essential components of their diet. This can lead to malnutrition and serious health problems among the chicken population.

Additionally, the act of feeding feral chickens attracts more of them to populated areas, worsening issues such as noise disturbances, landscape damage, and even aggression. As their numbers increase, so too do the associated problems, creating an aggravating situation for residents.

Perhaps most importantly, feeding feral chickens can contribute to the spread of disease. When large groups gather, they create perfect conditions for the transmission of pathogens, such as bird flu and salmonella. This not only poses a risk to the chickens themselves but also to other wildlife, domestic pets, and humans who come into contact with them.



In light of these concerns, it's clear that feeding feral chickens is not a harmless pastime but rather a practice with far-reaching consequences. By adhering to City Code Sec. 10-11 and refraining from providing food to wild roosters, hens, and chicks, we can help mitigate these issues and preserve the unique character of our island.

There are better ways to appreciate and coexist with these feathered residents. Simply observing them from a distance allows them to maintain their natural instincts. They also make great subjects for amateur and professional artists and photographers!

Let's all do our part to protect the well-being of feral chickens and maintain harmony within our community by refraining from feeding them. By respecting city ordinances and considering the broader implications of our actions, we can ensure that Key West remains a welcoming and vibrant home for generations to come.



### 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 03/19/2024):

- Housing Manager (F/T)
- HVAC Maintenance Mechanic (F/T)
- Maintenance Mechanic (F/T)
- Receptionist (P/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:**

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



## VOCATIONAL & COLLEGE

### SCHOLARSHIPS for High School Seniors!

Eligible students residing in Housing Authority communities may apply for 2 different scholarships: *The Housing Authority Class Night Scholarship & the Gulf Atlantic Bank/Housing Authority collaborative scholarship.* **DON'T WAIT!** The DEADLINE for these scholarships is **APRIL 10, 2024.** – Call Mr. Gary today (305) 304-5568.

## LOOKING BACK

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

- ◆ Replaced the aging and leaking roof of the Maintenance Department.
- ◆ Implemented a new after-hours answering service with all bi-lingual agents answering calls for maintenance emergencies.
- ◆ Began working with architects and engineers to redesign and repave the parking lot at SCP.
- ◆ Work started on a new generator and service upgrade at SCP.
- ◆ Contracted with a pest control company to provide termite protection at Roosevelt Gardens.
- ◆ Recognized Ms. Ana Roca as Employee of the 4th Quarter.
- ◆ Welcomed new board member Commissioner Richard Toppino to the KWHB Board of Commissioners and thanked longtime Chairman and Commissioner Frank Toppino for his years of dedicated service.

## RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

### WITH MR. GARY

**"All kids need is a little help, a little hope, and somebody who believes in them." - Magic Johnson**

The phrase "It takes a village to raise a child" resonated each time our H.O.B. students recounted how much Mr. Butler believed in them. Parents told me their children "cried and cried" when learning of Coach Butler's passing. It is with a heavy heart that we extend our deepest condolences to Dexter Butler's family. May Coach Butler continue to be an inspiration to the children throughout our community. Dexter Butler's genuine care for students both in the classroom and on the basketball court will forever be cherished.

## SENIORS, SENIORS, SENIORS!

### SENIOR CITIZENS receive the Gift of Music

Thank you to the Board of **Impromptu Classical Concerts at St. Paul's Episcopal Church** for gifting our seniors from Senior Citizen Plaza, Poinciana Gardens, & Jack Murray Senior Complex with a season of classical music & thank you to the amazing team from **Monroe County Social Services** who provided transportation to those who needed it.

### SENIOR SHOPPING at Publix & Winn-Dixie Shopping Centers

Kudos to the amazing team from **Monroe County Social Services** for spearheading a Pilot Program aimed at providing transportation for residents living at Senior Citizen Plaza & Jack Murray Senior Complex to nearby shopping complexes. This initiative enables seniors to enjoy social outings with 90 minutes of time to explore the variety of stores within the two shopping hubs.

**SENIORS at Jack Murray Senior Complex & Poinciana Gardens** are always invited to attend activities & classes in the Auditorium at Senior Citizen Plaza, including Bingo, Dancercise, Fitness, Chair Yoga, Movie Screenings, & Movement & Dance with Lucy.

### **Gary Young Contact Info**

Email: [youngg@kwha.org](mailto:youngg@kwha.org)  
Telephone: **(305) 747-0326**

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