



SPRING 2026  
Volume 5, 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

Passover—Starts—April 1

Good Friday—April 3  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**

Easter Sunday—April 5

Tax Day—April 15

Earth Day—April 22

Cinco de Mayo—May 5

Mother's Day—May 10

Memorial Day—May 25  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**

Flag Day—June 14

Juneteenth—June 19  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**

## Take the Stress Out of Tax Season: Free Tax Prep is Here!

Tax season is officially here, but don't let it stress you out! We've got some fantastic news for our residents. If your household income was less than \$67,000 in 2025, you qualify for completely free tax preparation services. Even better? Your taxes will be prepared by friendly, IRS-certified volunteers, so you can rest easy knowing you are in great hands and getting the maximum refund possible. The walk-in location is conveniently located, with free parking, and no appointment is necessary! Just drop by during a time that works best for your schedule:



**Harvey Govt Center—1200 Truman Avenue, Key West**  
**Mondays, until April 13 (12pm – 4pm)**

To make your visit as quick and smooth as possible, come prepared! You will need to bring a photo ID, Social Security cards (or ITIN documents) and birth dates for everyone on your return, a copy of last year's tax return, and all your current tax forms (W-2s, 1099s, 1098s, and 1095 ACA statements). If you are married and filing jointly, remember that *both spouses must be present*. Finally, *don't forget to bring a blank check so your refund can be directly deposited right into your bank account!*

Have questions? You can learn more by visiting [uwcollierkeys.org/vita](http://uwcollierkeys.org/vita), emailing [vta@uwcollierkeys.org](mailto:vta@uwcollierkeys.org), or calling **305-563-1470**.



## HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

### From Public Housing to Making History



Did you know that public housing communities have been the starting point for some of the most famous and influential people in American history? For example, before he was the "King of Rock 'n' Roll," a teenage **Elvis Presley** lived in the Lauderdale Courts public housing complex in Memphis, Tennessee, from 1949 to 1953. In fact, Elvis used to practice his guitar in the basement laundry room and play songs for his neighbors in the courtyard! Today, his former apartment is a historical landmark.

Public housing has also shaped incredible leaders. Supreme Court Justice **Sonia Sotomayor** grew up in the Bronxchester Houses in New York. She has frequently spoken about how the tight-knit community and the lessons she learned in public housing helped her develop the resilience and drive to become the first Hispanic and Latina Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. It just goes to show that incredible journeys can start right in our own neighborhoods!

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Residents,

As we head into the spring season, I want to take a moment to say how proud I am of our communities. Spring is a time for fresh starts, spring cleaning, and looking forward to the rest of the year.

Here at the Key West Housing Authority, our goal is always to make sure you have the resources you need to thrive. That's why you'll see some great information in this month's newsletter, like how to get your taxes filed for

free! I highly encourage you to take advantage of these incredible local programs.

I also want to remind you that our amazing property management and maintenance teams are available for you. Whether you have a question, a concern, or just want to share a great idea for your community, we want to hear from you.

Please enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and thank you for helping us make our Key West Housing such wonderful places to call home.

In service, *Randy Sterling*

**“If you want to accomplish anything in life, you can't just sit back and hope it will happen. You've got to *make it happen.*” - Chuck Norris**

(1940-2026—American martial artist, action star, and cultural icon )

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Gary “Mr. Gary” Young  
Resident Activities Coordinator

*Interviewed by Peter Batty*



This September, Gary Young will celebrate an impressive 28 years with the Housing Authority. His journey began as a Wellness & Prevention Counselor in the Safeport Program and as an instructor for the Campus South Program at the Lang Millian complex. Today, he proudly serves as our Resident Activities Director.

Gary's love for his job shines through in everything he does. He genuinely enjoys connecting with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures, always striving to help residents improve their quality of life. He is also quick to credit the strong support he receives from Housing Authority staff for helping him make a difference.

Originally from Long Island, New York, Gary found his way to Key West in 1979. Outside of work, family is at the center of his world. He and his wife of 38 years, Elizabeth, have two children, Claire and Emily, along with a Havanese dog named Sadie Pearl. These days, Gary especially cherishes time spent with his one-year-old granddaughter, Sophia Marie. A true lifelong learner, his hobbies include gardening, painting, and creative writing. When it comes to dining, he is perfectly happy with a home-cooked meal, but he jokingly admits he is always ready to go to El Siboney or Chico's when Elizabeth wants to take him!

Having lived in Key West for over four decades, Gary has witnessed many changes. While he sometimes wishes the island had less traffic and smaller crowds, he holds a deep appreciation for its history. If he could travel back in time, he says he would love to ride his bike, cruising the residential neighborhoods, and revisit the quiet old Duval Street, counting the "Gone Fishing" signs.



## \$\$\$ Easy Ways to Save Cash at the Gas Pump! \$\$\$

Let's face it: filling up the gas tank isn't exactly the most fun way to spend your hard-earned money. With gas prices quickly climbing, it can feel like a big chunk of your budget is being left at the pump. But don't worry! There are plenty of super easy, everyday tricks you can use to stretch your gas mileage and keep more cash in your wallet.

**Pump Up Those Tires:** Under-inflated tires make your car work much harder, which burns more gas. Check your tire pressure once a month to instantly improve your gas mileage!

**Drive Smooth and Steady:** Aggressive driving like speeding, rapid acceleration, and slamming on the brakes can lower your gas mileage by up to 30% at highway speeds! Take a deep breath, take it easy on the pedals, and watch your fuel last longer.

**Tap into Rewards:** Don't miss out on free money! Many local stations (like Circle K & Shell) have fantastic rewards programs. For example, with Fuel Rewards from Shell, sign up and Save 10¢/gal on your first fill, 20¢/gal on your second fill and 30¢/gal on your third fill at participating Shell stations when you complete your fills within 60 days of joining. After that, keep saving 5¢/gal.

**There's an App for That:** Before you pull into the first gas station you see, check a free app like GasBuddy or Waze on your smartphone. These apps show you a map of the gas stations near you and tell you exactly who has the cheapest price that day.

**Lighten the Load:** Are you driving around with heavy tools, old donations you've been meaning to drop off, or bulky sports equipment? An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle can reduce your miles per gallon. Clear out the clutter and give your engine a break!

**Turn it Off:** If you are waiting in the car for more than a minute, like waiting for a friend to run into the store or sitting in a long school pickup line, turn off your engine. Idling actually uses more fuel than restarting your car!

**A Quick Bonus Tip:** Try to combine your errands into one single trip! A warm car engine is more fuel-efficient than a cold one. Making one trip to the grocery store, the post office, and the pharmacy all at once will use much less gas than making three separate trips throughout the week.

**Happy driving!**

## GOOD TO KNOW!

The Monroe County Public Library at 700 Fleming Street in Key West offers Computer Classes every Tuesday & Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.! Topics include Basic Microsoft Word & Resume Formatting. Stop by their front desk or call 305-292-3595 to sign up for an upcoming class.



## 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 03/21/2026):

- 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:**

Lua Greene, SHRM-CP  
Human Resources Manager  
[GreeneL@kwha.org](mailto:GreeneL@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.

### ATTN Housing Authority High School Seniors!

*April 17 is the final deadline to submit your Housing Authority scholarship application. You are eligible to apply if you live in any Housing Authority managed community or your family receives a Section 8 voucher. Call Mr.*

*Gary for more information.*



## LOOKING BACK

Winter was as busy as ever! Below are just a few of the exciting things that happened the past few months:

**Holiday Cheer:** We hosted a wonderful Christmas Dinner for the residents of SCP, complete with live music and a special visit from Santa Claus!

**A New Ride:** We purchased a brand-new passenger van, which will be a fantastic addition to our resident services programs.

**Poinciana Plaza Facelift:** We officially started work on concrete repairs, new stucco, and fresh paint for 34 buildings at Poinciana Plaza. We can't wait for you to see the refreshed look!

**SCP Upgrades:** We continued modernizing units as they become vacant, and we are making great progress on installing a brand-new fire alarm system for enhanced safety.

**Poinciana Gardens Updates:** Work has begun to convert the assisted living units at Poinciana Gardens into independent living units.

**Curb Appeal:** We installed beautiful new landscaping at the front entrance of the Main Administration building on Kennedy Drive. Stop by and check it out!

## RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

### WITH MR. GARY

*"The ultimate inspiration is the deadline."*

Nolan Bushnell – businessman & electrical engineer who created the Chuck E. Cheese chain and Atari, Inc.

### Senior Citizen Transportation Available

We are happy to announce that FREE transportation services are available for all Senior Citizens. To register for transportation, call the Guidance Care Center at 305-434-7660. To connect to the dispatcher, be sure to press option 2 when prompted by the recording. If the dispatcher is on another call, leave a message with your name & phone number to receive a call back. **Group shopping trips** are available every Wednesday for residents of Jack Murray Senior Complex, Poinciana Gardens & Senior Citizen Plaza. Shopping destinations alternate between Publix & Winn Dixie shopping centers every week. Check with the dispatcher or your housing manager for the pick up & drop off schedule at your location.

### **FREE Summer Camp Scholarships for KWAH Kids!**

Resident children ages 6 to 11 can get a free week of summer camp while spots last! Choose from **Art & History Camp, Coral Camp, or Sailing Camp 101**, all taught by trained professionals.

Parents are responsible for Mon–Fri on-time transportation, lunch, snacks, a reusable water bottle, & sunblock.

To claim your spot, call Mr. Gary at **305-304-5568**.

(If he doesn't answer, just leave a voicemail with your name and number, and he'll call you right back!)

KWAH offers a FREE after school program for families who reside at Lang Milian, George Allen, Robert Gabriel & Fort Village. Elementary and Middle School students enjoy educational games, structured play activities, and instruction at the computer lab.



**Call Mr. Gary TODAY! at (305) 304-5568 & schedule an Open House visit to our classroom at Building 13-G, Lang Milian Apartments, 301 White Street near the playground!**

KWAH's summer program for children ages 6-11 begins in June. Summer school students join in the fun when they return home from school. Days start at Bldg. 13G at Lang Milian Apartments. Off-site programs are limited to 14, on a first come/first come basis. Activities include Water Safety at the MLK, Jr. Community Pool, the playground at the Truman Waterfront Waterpark, Boondocks Mini Golf, the Aquarium, the Wreckers Museum and the Conch Tour train! We meet on Monday & Wednesdays during the summer.