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# Agency Wide

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## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTS

GMHA is still actively enrolling families into the Individual Development Account (IDA) program. Any GMHA assisted family that has children under the age of eighteen in the household and meets the required income restrictions may participate. During this two year savings program participants make a monthly deposit of either \$25 or \$50, which is then matched at a rate of 2 to 1. If participants save \$50 a month for each of the 24 months they will have a total of \$3,600 at the end of the program including the match and personal funds combined.

During the two years families attend a series of money management classes and a set of workshops, which cover budgeting, insurance, investments, and retirement. Participants receive individual financial counseling and a free copy of their credit report. At the end of the two years, families can choose to use their savings and the match funds as a down payment on a house, college, or to start a business.

At this time we have 32 families participating in the IDA program and we are looking to expand both the participants and the funding. We currently have three banks collaborating with us on this program: Fifth Third Bank, National City Bank, and Sky Bank. Greene County Department of Job & Family Services provides most of the match funds. We have had three successful graduates from the IDA program one which bought a house in Beavercreek and used the IDA funds towards the down payment.

## INCOME CHANGES

Tenants are reminded that any and all changes in income must be reported to the housing manager within 10 days of the change. Do not hesitate to ask us what constitutes a change in income. Better safe than sorry!



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## CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS

Here are a few tips compiled by the Attorney General's Office to inform you of your rights with charitable solicitations:

- ✓ If you receive a call from a solicitor asking you to donate to a charity, the most important question for you to ask is "what percentage of my donation will the charity actually get?"
- ✓ Ask the solicitor if his/her company is registered with the Attorney General's Office. (If a solicitor is calling on behalf of a charity, state law requires the company to be registered.)
- ✓ If the caller is unable to answer all your questions to your satisfaction, ask that information be mailed to you before you make a donation.
- ✓ Don't make a donation if you are "guaranteed to win a prize" or if the caller sends a courier to pick up your check.
- ✓ To have your name removed from phone marketing lists, write:

Direct Marketing Assoc.  
Telephone Preference Service  
P.O. Box 9014  
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9014

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# Agency Wide

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## BREAST & CERVICAL CANCER

If you live in Greene County, you may be eligible for free screening services. The Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Project (BCCP) offers health education, early detection, and early treatment services through local providers. Depending on age, health insurance and income, BCCP offers clinical breast exams, mammograms, pap smears, and more. Facts:

- Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among women. A woman has a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer in her lifetime.
- Early cervical cancer rarely causes symptoms. It can be detected by a pelvic exam and a Pap smear. The Pap smear can detect precancerous conditions. Simple treatment may prevent the development of cancer.



To learn more, call 279-5828 or 1-800-616-6784, ext. 5828. Women will be informed immediately if they are eligible for free screening services.

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## GREENE WORKS

Greene Works is affiliated with the Greene County Department of Job & Family Services. They can help you find a job by providing the following services:

- Career Testing
- Resume Writing Classes
- Job Posting Binder
- Resource Library
- Interview Preparation
- Agency Referrals
- Training to Upgrade Skills
- Computer Lab

For more information call 562-6565 or 426-8334

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# Section 8

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## SECTION 8 LANDLORD SURVEY

GMHA sent a survey to Section 8 Landlords in the fall of 2001. Over 120 landlords responded, indicating areas where improvement is needed and areas in which we are effective. GMHA staff will work on all areas, but are focusing on the following five that received the lowest rating: 1) My ability to reach GMHA by phone; 2) If I leave a message, the timeliness in which my call is returned; 3) My experience with the rental increase process; 4) My ability to reach a member of Senior Management; and 5) Once I've communicated a problem, the timeliness of the resolution. Our highest ranking areas were: 1) Timeliness of payment; 2) Timeliness of inspections; and 3) Professionalism of inspectors. If you would like to see the actual survey results and the Executive Director's response, then call 376-2908 or come to GMHA's office during business hours.

# Section 8

## SECTION 8 VOUCHER PROGRAM

GMHA stopped issuing Section 8 Vouchers at the beginning of November 2001 due to being over leased. It is anticipated that GMHA won't issue Vouchers again until the end of the summer, even though the waiting list has more than doubled from one year ago. The pattern of lease-up for the program changed dramatically in this past year. We realize now that the down turn in the economy and September 11, 2001 had a significant impact on the program. Prior to this, three or four vouchers were issued for every one that was used. In the fall this changed with almost every voucher issued being utilized. The turnover rate of participants going off the Voucher Program changed from 30 each month to less than 10 each month.

To top it off, GMHA's actual costs for Section 8 Voucher units exceeded the per unit cost that HUD funded. This was a result primarily of a congressional mandate to house a higher percent of very low-income families and the loss of or reduction in employment of families on the program. All of these factors were experienced by a number of other high performing housing authorities. Through much persistence, GMHA was able to receive additional funds from HUD to cover the additional costs. HUD has now made a mechanism available to permit high performing housing authorities to lease up to their reserved units, even when their costs are higher than the HUD contract.

GMHA is applying for additional vouchers, but many are awarded to areas with a larger population than Greene County.

### LANDLORD REQUEST FOR RENT INCREASE

In order for GMHA to make a determination on a rent increase the following procedures need to be followed:

- Submit your request for increase in writing to GMHA and a copy to the tenant at least 60 days before the anniversary date. Please specify the dollar amount that you are requesting.
- Requests made up to 60 days following the anniversary date will also be considered for increase. However, if approved, the increase will not go into effect for 60 days.
- An explanation for the request for increase is needed in order for the inspector to make a determination of rent reasonableness. All requests must be deemed rent reasonable by the GMHA Inspector before any increases will be made.

Please direct the request and any questions or concerns to Joyce Huddleson, Section 8 Housing Manager.

### VOUCHER PROGRAM

#### UNITS ASSISTED IN GREENE COUNTY

Xenia	620 units
Fairborn	545
Bellbrook	112
Jamestown	21
Yellow Springs	15
Beavercreek	11
Wilberforce	6
Cedarville	5
Bowersville	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1336</b>

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# Project TOTAL

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Project TOTAL, which stands for Teaching Our Tenants And Landlords, is a program that provides supportive services to homeless families and individuals and at-risk families and individuals. The following represents a few activities that Project TOTAL facilitates.

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## HEART & HOME PEER SUPPORT GROUP

In December 2001, Project TOTAL dedicated the Heart & Home Quilt to GMHA. This hand stitched quilt started in June of 1999, was designed and quilted by homeless or formerly homeless families and individuals that participated in Project TOTAL's Heart & Home Peer Support Group. This quilt, which is on display in GMHA's lobby, represents what having a home means to this group. Each participant designed and quilted their own square. Together these squares portray the impact and hope of homelessness. The project was a success and is truly a remarkable form of expression. GMHA welcomes the public to view the quilt during normal business hours.

Heart & Home meets weekly on Wednesday from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. The group focuses on providing positive support to homeless or formerly homeless families. The group has recently focused on money management, stress management, anger management, and parenting issues. Participants of Project TOTAL are encouraged to attend. A Project TOTAL volunteer provides child care during this time.



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## LANDLORD MEETINGS

Project TOTAL offers support and information to Section 8 landlords through monthly landlord meetings. In the past few months, Montgomery Insurance spoke to landlords about insurance on rentals for landlords and tenants; Fair Housing discussed landlord rights and responsibilities; and the Greene County Drug Task Force gave useful information to landlords. Project TOTAL would like to take this opportunity to thank those individuals who have taken the time this year to speak at landlord meetings. Thank you to Brad Montgomery, Debra Mayes, and Detective Lane.



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## VOLUNTEERS

Project TOTAL has two new volunteers. Mary Evans, a Cedarville University Social Work student, has been a valuable asset to the program by working with program participants. Andrea Plaisted has also been a valuable asset to the program by helping with the Heart & Home Peer Support Group's transportation and child care needs. Thank you both for your commitment, compassion, and dedication to Project TOTAL!

If you are interested in volunteering with Project TOTAL, please contact Mary Jo Post at GMHA.

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# Low Rent

## FROM THE MANAGERS:

CONGRATULATIONS TO Roseanne Oliver, for earning a degree in African and African American Studies from Wright State University. She is one of two people to benefit from WSU's new major. Roseanne has been accepted at United Theological Seminary and will pursue a master's of divinity degree.

All low rent residents that have filled out their annual re-certification packets should expect to receive their new rent statements in the upcoming months.

GMHA will be sponsoring several resident barbecues and get-togethers this summer. This is a chance for residents to come together, meet one another and chat with GMHA staff. More details will be provided in the upcoming weeks.

Important Reminder: Residents considering a pet are reminded that only one cat or one dog is allowed. No pit bulls or rottweilers can be approved. Residents must notify their housing manager before the pet is allowed in the home. The housing manager will send paperwork to be completed as well as information on the \$200 pet deposit. When the paperwork and the pet deposit are received by GMHA, the pet may become a member of the household.

## FROM THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT:

### *PREPARE FOR YOUR ANNUAL GMHA INSPECTION*

Don't fall victim to the 10 most commonly failed items. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do all the doors in my unit close and/or latch properly? (including sliding closet doors)
2. Are doors weather stripped and airtight?
3. Is my kitchen sink, bathroom sink, and tub free of leaks, drips, etc.?
4. Do all my openable windows have screens? And, are they free of holes and tears?
5. Do all the windows in my unit close properly? And, do the windows lock that are 6 feet or more up off the ground and are accessible to a balcony or fire escape?
6. Is there a smoke detector on every floor of my home? (including the basement)
7. Do all my smoke detectors have batteries and are in working order?
8. Do all electrical outlets and light switches have covers?
9. Do all my light switches and electrical outlets work?
10. Are your floors free of "trip hazards" ? (tears, holes, loose edges, etc.)

If you answered "No" to any of these questions, please correct the problem or contact GMHA so the problem can be corrected before the inspection.

## LAWN CARE

If you have a lawn, you already know how fast the grass grows this time of year. It is necessary for you to mow once a week to keep the grass at an acceptable height. Our office has already received neighborhood complaints about tall grass. Please help GMHA by doing your part to eliminate these calls.



Please pull or spray all weeds growing around your foundation. Weeds not only make the property look bad but it draws bugs. Try your hand at landscaping this year! Improve the looks of the property! You can plant flowers and trim shrubs. We can provide loaner tools to do the job!

*Do you need suggestions or guidance? Please call the Maintenance Department.*

# Low Rent

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## AIR CONDITIONERS

HUD requires that the installation of all window air conditioners not use the only emergency exit from a room. In other words, if there is only one window in a room, a window AC can not be put in that room. A room with at least two windows is needed before a window air conditioner can be installed. Any questions? Call the Maintenance Department.

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## RESIDENT SURVEY

All Low Rent residents of GMHA were sent a survey in March to get more detailed information about how GMHA can improve communication with its residents. Of the participants responding to the survey, 42% of the people live in senior/disabled developments and 58% of live in family housing. We really appreciate so many residents taking the time to respond, sharing their ideas and concerns!

There were hundreds of comments received to the open-ended questions. A majority were positive but there were also complaints. We will be reviewing and analyzing these to determine what actions or changes we can make to improve the way we work with residents. Some of the comments were specific and constructive and we will be discussing these more at the next Resident Advisory Board meeting.

Any resident who would like to follow up and be more specific about ways we could improve our management services are encouraged to talk with their Housing Manager or Meghan Gonsalves, the Low Rent Supervisor. We will include a brief Question and Answer article in each of the next newsletters addressing some of the issues raised in this survey.

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## **QUESTION: I have ants-spiders-termites-fleas-earwigs...etc. in my house. What can GMHA do to help?**

**ANSWER:** If you suspect that there are termites or carpenter ants in or around your house, please call in a work order and we will investigate. If they are present, we will exterminate them. If you have roaches we will treat the house to get rid of them. If a roach problem continues due to poor housekeeping, the resident will be responsible for future extermination costs.

We do not exterminate for ants, spiders, bees, fleas etc. This is not GMHA's responsibility. It is each resident's responsibility to deal with these critters if they really become a problem. For ants, there are products that can be purchased to get rid of them. "TERRO" is an excellent, affordable ant bait (sold in most hardware stores). For spiders and fleas, thorough and frequent vacuuming are the best way to remove these bugs and their eggs. If this is not effective, there are various brands of foggers which will kill these pests. For bees and hornets, their nest needs to be located and there are many types of foams, sprays or foggers that will kill them if they are a serious nuisance. Physically removing or destroying nests is another way to eradicate these pests. Be careful and wear protective clothing if you attempt this. Other bugs like earwigs and pill bugs appear a lot in the spring when there is a lot of moisture around the house. Homeowners and renters on the open market must deal with these concerns themselves or pay a professional to take care the problem. Often these are just temporary nuisances that will diminish as summer and dryer weather rolls in.

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# Home Front

Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority  
538 N. Detroit Street  
Xenia, Ohio 45385



## Board of Commissioners

Roger Saddler, Chair  
Tammy McClellan, Vice Chair  
Marsha Bayless  
Nancy Hadley  
Cecil Brown  
Susan Stiles, Executive Director

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## HOME FRONT

The Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority is committed to providing quality affordable housing and services in an efficient and creative manner.

## SPOTLIGHT

### STAFF ADDITIONS & CHANGES

Receptionist – MaryAnn Angi  
Low Rent Assistant – Danita Blessing  
Low Rent Housing Manager – JC Craig  
Section 8 Manager – Cheryl Porter  
Applications Clerical Assistant, Resident Initiative – Laurie Hansen  
Section 8 Clerical Assistant, Resident Initiative – Catalina Gould

***GMHA application information is now available in SPANISH.  
Just ask at the front desk.***