

538 NORTH  
DETROIT ST.  
XENIA, OHIO  
45385  
937.376.2908  
OR  
937.429.7736

# GMHA's Homefront

SPRING & SUMMER 2008

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Start you own  
IDA
- Project TOTAL  
Landlord  
Meetings
- Borrow a Lawn  
Mower
- Neighborhood  
Walks
- Community  
Service
- Landlord  
Reminders
- Frequently Asked  
Questions

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Project TOTAL	1
Public Housing	2
Section 8	3
IDA	4

## Director's Corner

For the first time, Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority (GMHA) has closed our Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Wait List, effective 5-1-08, to everyone except those who are homeless according to HUD's definition. HUD defines homeless as staying in an emergency shelter, living on the street, or living in a place not meant for human habitation. GMHA currently has over 1500 on the wait list.

For the past year and a half, the number of clients coming into the office to apply for housing has more than doubled. We have seen a significant influx of families applying from Montgomery and Clark counties. Their S8 Wait Lists are closed. As a result, a number of their residents come to Greene County to apply. It has made it very difficult for our Agency to process this large number of applications. GMHA is required, when the wait list is open, to accept applications from residents outside Greene County. We are able to give an additional point for being a Greene County resident.

The Public Housing Wait List will remain open. When The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Wait List is reopened, an announcement will be in the community newspaper and on GMHA's website.



**Susan Stiles**  
Executive Director

## Project TOTAL

Project TOTAL (Teaching Our Tenants and Landlords) has been very busy since our last Home Front Issue. The changes in our economy are leaving many homeless or at risk of losing their housing due to foreclosures, loss of employment or simply not having enough to make ends meet at the end of the month. We are currently serving 93 families—25 of them are working to keep their current housing by learning to work with and resolve issues with their landlords. Many are able to overcome their issues and stabilize in their housing through setting goals for themselves such as getting better employment through job training and improving living skills such as budgeting and time management.

Landlord mediation and monthly Landlord Meetings are also a part of our program. In May for our Landlord Meeting, Project TOTAL presented a speaker from Children's Medical Center of Dayton to talk about the silent killer — Carbon Monoxide. Carbon monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America, killing more than 2,000 people each year and sending more than 15,000 to emergency rooms for treatment. It is an odorless, colorless and toxic gas. Small children, pregnant women, and the elderly are the most vulnerable. CO is produced anytime a fuel is burned. Sources include gas or oil furnaces, water heaters, space heaters, clothes dryers, barbecue grills, fireplaces, gas ovens, portable generators and cars. We would like to encourage landlords to add CO detectors to their rental units, perhaps replacing their smoke detectors with a combination unit for detecting smoke and CO. For those landlords in attendance, free CO detectors were handed out. Please contact us if you have any topics you would like to see addressed at upcoming meetings.

Project TOTAL is primarily Case Management Support for those who are homeless or at risk of eviction. We help families and individuals work toward obtaining and stabilizing in permanent housing. Clients in Project TOTAL can be referred for help with physical and mental health concerns when necessary which may impair their ability to be successful in housing. Many issues contribute to homelessness and most people think it will never happen to them.

Currently there are three staff members in Project Total: Bernice Brett, Supervisor, Heather Stokes and Sondra Guenther, Case Managers. We may be reached at 352-0270.

# Public Housing Department

## OHAC Scholarship Award

We want to take this opportunity to congratulate Shelly Sprinkle, one of our Fairborn tenants, for her great accomplishment in winning this year's OHAC Scholarship. Shelly has worked hard to continue her education and is very grateful for the help as always. Shelly is the proud mother of two gorgeous kids, and has utilized all the resources available to her in order to become self sufficient and provide for her children. You Go Girl !!! Everyone at GMHA is very happy for you!

## Public Housing Changes

The Public Housing Department has successfully changed to Asset Based Management as required by HUD. GMHA's tenants and housing units are our greatest assets!!! The Asset Managers will be doing as much as they can to ensure that GMHA's greatest assets are in compliance with HUD regulations and community standards. As a result, you will be seeing your manager in the field at the apartments and homes. It is our goal to be a positive member of the community. Your manager will be driving or stopping by each unit on a weekly basis. Should you have any questions regarding your housing lease, please feel free to contact your manager.

## Neighborhood Walk in Xenia

On April 24th, Mary Jo and Jessica completed an east end walk in Xenia with Detective Jeff Osborne. The purpose of this walk was to establish successful communication with the Xenia Police Department and to better serve the community. The walk was a great success. GMHA was able to speak with residents about issues and concerns they have within their community. GMHA looks forward to continuing a healthy, strong relationship with the Xenia Police Department and GMHA residents.

## Community Service

Please keep in mind that if you do not meet any of the following exemptions, you are required to complete 8 hours of Community Service!

- 62 years of age or older
- Disabled
- Primary caretaker of a disabled individual
- Employed or a participant of a Welfare to Work Program
- TANF recipient participating in a required economic Self Sufficiency Program or Work Activity

If you are unable to find a site to fulfill your Community Service Hours, GMHA may be able to assist you in finding placement with our Maintenance Department. Please be sure that you are completing the hours monthly and turning in your time sheets on a monthly basis to your manager.

## Lawn Mowers Available

If you live in one of the GMHA Public Housing Units and do not own a lawn mower, you may call GMHA. Maintenance will drop off a lawn mower to your unit and you will be given 48 hours to use the mower. There is a drop off fee and a pick up fee of \$5.00 each. Remember, you as the resident are responsible for the upkeep of your yard!

## Community Rooms

If you are a resident at Maggie McKnight, Maple Terrace, Hawthorne, or Lawson Place, and are interested in making a reservation for the Community Room, you will need to contact your manager two weeks in advance. There will be a \$15.00 deposit that will be returned as long as the Room is left in the condition it was found.

## Emergencies

The following is a list of what is considered an emergency and warrants an after hours call to our maintenance staff:

- All electricity out
- Uncontrollable water flow
- Gas leak or fuel smell
- Break In (unsecured window or door)
- Lock outs (will be charged to resident)
- Stopped up toilet (if there is only one in the unit)
- Sparks or smoke
- Refrigerator not working (room temperature inside)
- Smoke detector can't be turned off (hard wired only)
- No water (well only)
- Elevator out of order

For the above emergencies after 4:00 pm and before 7:30 am call 352-0284 or 429-7736 ext 1090. Leave a message describing the problem and a phone number where you can be reached. GMHA's on-call staff will be contacted. For emergencies during regular office hours, 7:30 am to 4:00 pm, call 352-0265 or 429-7736 ext 1028.

## Summer Maintenance for Your Unit

- Clean your gutters if physically able on the family units
- Clean up sticks in your yard or on your grounds
- Keep your grass mowed
- Check your outside water faucets for leaks
- For ants, try "Thoro" from your local hardware store (GMHA will only treat for carpenter ants)

## New Resident Initiative

The Public Housing Dept. welcomes Nanci Evans as its newest team member. Nanci has been hired as the new Clerical Resident Initiative. She began on March 31st. Welcome Nanci!

# Section 8 Department

## The Roles of the Tenant, Landlord, and GMHA

Once GMHA approves the family's housing unit, the family and the landlord sign a lease for one year. The landlord and GMHA sign a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) contract. This means that tenants, landlords, and GMHA have obligations and responsibilities under the Section 8 Voucher Program.

When the unit is approved, the tenant may be required to pay a security deposit to the landlord. After the first year, the landlord may initiate a new lease or allow the family to remain on a month to month basis. If a new lease is signed, a copy must be given to GMHA.

While living in the unit, the family is expected to comply with the lease and all program requirements, pay their share of rent on time, maintain the unit in good condition, and notify GMHA of any changes in income or household composition. Tenants risk losing their GMHA assistance if they do not follow the above regulations.

The landlord must provide decent, safe and sanitary housing to their tenants. The unit must pass Housing Quality Standards (HQS) and be maintained up to those standards as long as the landlord leases to the client under the voucher program. Landlords may not charge the tenant more after they move in than what was agreed to on the lease and the HAP contract. Landlords risk being removed from the program if they violate this regulation.

GMHA administers the voucher program. We enter into a contract with the landlord to provide housing assistance payments on behalf of the family. Annually, GMHA must reexamine the family's income and household composition, and inspect each unit to ensure that the family and the unit continues to comply with HUD regulations.

## Landlord Reminders

When a unit become available that you would like to rent through the Section 8 Voucher Program, please contact the GMHA Receptionist. She will put your listing on the bulletin board in the lobby.

If you have changed the responsibility of ownership for the stove and/or refrigerator, or have a change for responsibility of the utilities, please submit the change in writing prior to the annual recertification date. The change will become effective on the annual recertification date.

Please return completed contracts as soon as possible in order to start the Housing Assistance Payment from GMHA. We pay only two times a month.

Please contact GMHA immediately if you find that one of your tenants has vacated the unit without giving you proper notice. This will help assure that the housing assistance payments are accurate.

## Report Changes

Families are required to report to GMHA any change in household composition or income within 10 calendar days of when it occurred. These changes must be in writing and must include:

- All new income for the family including the address, telephone number (and fax number if possible) for the source of the income
- Lump sum payments
- Dates of hire or termination
- Adding family members to the household must be approved by GMHA and the landlord before the change occurs

*(This next section is definitely worth repeating again in this issue of the Homefront.)*

## Client's Frequently Asked Questions:

### *When can I move to another unit?*

After your Housing Choice Voucher contract has been in effect for one year, or at the end of any additional lease period after the first year, you may request to move. You must notify your housing manager. You may not move out if you have an outstanding balance with your landlord. GMHA has an Intent to Vacate form that needs to be completed by both the client and landlord. This form can be sent to you or picked up in our office. This form must be turned in by the last working day of the month prior to the month in which you wish to move. You will be required to attend a move-in briefing session prior to receiving your new voucher.

### *When should I turn in a Continued Occupancy form?*

In the event you are unable to move out within the month you planned and wish to remain in the current unit for another month, you should complete the Continued Occupancy form. This form must be turned in by the last working day of the month in which you originally planned to be moved out, to insure continued payment to the current landlord.

### *Do I have to be present when the Annual Inspection occurs?*

No. However, there must be a responsible adult present, age 18 or over, to let the inspector into the unit.

### *I was not home for my inspection. Now what should I do?*

If you missed your first appointment for your Annual Inspection, it will be marked as a "no show" and a termination letter will be sent out to the tenant and the owner. Any missed inspection requires a written request to reschedule by the client in order to avoid termination of the rental assistance by GMHA.



Bulk Rate US  
Postage Paid  
Xenia, Ohio  
permit #22

538 North Detroit St.  
Xenia, Ohio 45385  
937.376.2908 or 937.429.7736

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

- Marsha Bayless, Chair
- Cecil Brown, Vice Chair
- Roger Saddler
- Nancy Hadley
- Esther Mills, Resident Board Member
- Susan Stiles, Executive Director

Housing That Works to Enhance Life in  
Greene County.



# IDA (an Individual Development Account)

**NOW**  
Opening  
Savings  
Accounts



**Is It Time To Walk a New Path in Life?**

**Let the IDA Program Get You  
Started!**

**Contact GMHA, Kim Baker  
at 937-352-0259**

**Would you like to earn money for a  
Down Payment on a Home, Small Business or  
Education?**

Then an Individual Development Account is for you! You can earn up to \$4,000 in funds when you save as little as \$25 a month in an IDA account. This is not a loan and you don't have to pay the money back once you use it! Call us to find out what so many others in Greene County already know: IDA accounts really work. There are no strange gimmicks and no hidden rules. An IDA is designed to help you save money, work on your credit and prepare you to purchase your new home or business. You will be taught useful skills such as: what to look for when shopping for a home, how to avoid predatory mortgages, tips on working with realtors, how to write a business plan and one-on-one assistance if you need a little more information. Call us today to find out more about this program. Enrollment is extremely limited due to the high popularity of this program, so call today. We would love to give you more information! Take the first step in saving for your future today!