HUD Presents Macon Housing Authority with $57,000 Public Housing FSS Grant

By Amanda Smith

Rob Young, Atlanta Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), announced a $57,990 grant check to the Macon Housing Authority recently to hire service coordinators who connect public housing residents with resources in the community to help them achieve economic independence.

Public housing has changed drastically over the years. In the late 1960s, early '70s, the focus began to change. What was intended as temporary housing turned into permanent housing as occupants were unable to move upward beyond a roof over their heads. Macon Housing Authority Executive Director John Hiscox has been on the job for 25 years, so he has witnessed these changes and seen the need for something more. Nowadays, things are looking brighter, much brighter. The Macon Housing Authority, through its Family Investment Center (located at Davis Homes in Macon), have taken public housing to a new level. Within the Family Investment Center are numerous organizations and services that help people advance themselves to higher levels. Agency partners and services available include the following:

- Adult Basic Education Center - Central Georgia Technical College
- After school program - Right touch/Nu Vision
- African Dance and Drumming - Sashe Dance Corp
- Community Care Program - Area Agency on Aging
- Evening computer classes at no charge
- Family Self Sufficiency program for employment goals
- Health care counseling, prescription assistance and physician referral - Community Health Works
- WINGS (Women Initiating New Goals for Success), a life skills program
Macon Housing Authority (MHA) offers more than just affordable housing for its residents. Through various grants, the Authority is able to provide programs like on-site GED classes, home ownership, and entrepreneurial opportunities so residents can reach the goals they have set for themselves.

The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program is another opportunity available to eligible Public Housing residents. The FSS program is designed to assist residents in achieving economic independence by providing resources, support and incentives that enable participants to reach short-term goals that will eventually lead to the ultimate goal of becoming economically self sufficient.

Why Should I become a Family Self Sufficiency participant?
As a FSS participant, you will have access to resources, information, and training and education opportunities that will help you reach your individual goals.

You will have a FSS case-manager and other FIC agency support staff to encourage you and help you overcome obstacles that in the past have prevented you from reaching your goals.

You will have an opportunity to accumulate cash through an escrow savings account that will be yours once you have met your goals and fulfilled terms set forth in the FSS Contract of Participation.

Where does the money come from that is deposited into the Escrow savings account and how is it calculated?
From funds obtained by MHA through HUD. Whenever you have a rent increase, due to Earned Income, you will pay your portion of the rent increase toward the Contract rent, and MHA will credit part or the same amount to your escrow savings account. For example:

You currently pay $50 rent to your landlord. You find a job that increases your rent to $150. Your rent went up by $100 due to earned income. You pay the landlord $150 and MHA credits $100 to your escrow savings account.

When will I receive a final disbursement of my escrow funds?
When you have fulfilled all the terms set forth in the FSS Contract of Participation.

How can I get more information?
Contact FSS case-managers at 752-5185
Monthly self-development workshops
Leap Summer Youth Enrichment Camp (Leadership, Education, Arts Program)

"Having all of these services together in one place is a great help to our residents," said Hiscox. "It's much easier for a person to take advantage of all of our services when they can do it at one place."

It's definitely not just a roof over your head now. After getting into a residence, clients may then join the Family Self Sufficiency program. FSS (just one part of the Family Investment Center) assigns each client a case manager, who keeps the client informed of the various services that are available to them, assisting them through the process of attaining his/her goals. Once a client graduates from the FSS program, they are usually referred to the Macon Middle Georgia Housing Counseling Center, where a housing counselor will work with the client, covering all aspects of home purchase.

Gloria Harvey is a just one example of the success of the FSS program. When she moved to Macon with her seven children, she was unemployed and receiving TANF. She joined the program in 1999, was employed by 2000, and has been moving upward ever since. Today, she is working with Steffone Wynn (Senior Homeownership Counselor) at the Middle Georgia Housing Counseling Center toward the purchase of her own home.

"It is so rewarding to help people, especially women, become self-sufficient and able to care for their children," said Hiscox. "To see a person gain self-worth and be proud of earning his/her own way is a blessed thing."

Macon Housing Authority's doors stand open to welcome you at the Family Investment Center
Call Rhonda Green-Barnes, Upward Mobility Coordinator (478) 752-5185

For a tour, appointments with the various agencies, or for more program information
In an effort to provide support to individuals and families in Macon Housing Authority’s (MHA) Public Housing Program, Senior Citizen’s Program, Homeownership Program, Section 8 Program and HOPE VI Program, the Family Counseling Center of Central Ga. will be providing information and answering questions in MHA’s quarterly newsletter. The purpose of the information is to help individuals and families live a productive life.

Individuals and families with a question can fax (745-0881), email (kgfcc@aol.com) or mail (277 MLK Blvd. Suite 203/Macon, Ga. 31201) the question to the Family Counseling Center. The person with the question will not be named in the newsletter.

Anyone interested in making an appointment with Family Counseling Center can call 745-2811. Through financial support from the City of Macon’s Community Development Block Grant Program, there is no charge for the appointment for MHA participants.

The following information is being provided for this quarter’s newsletter:

**Six Steps to a Healthier Family**

Help! I’m a parent and I don’t know what to do!” Have you ever heard those words coming from you? Parenting is the toughest job on earth that comes with no instructions. But a little patience and planning can go a long way towards stopping many problems in their tracks.

If you are a perfect parent, you can stop reading now—you will only be wasting your time. However, if you happen to fall into the category of "I could always use some parenting tips," these simple steps might be just what you are looking for to empower you to get rid of a lot of unnecessary parent/child conflict.

1. Be firm but fair.
   Allow children to ask questions, disagree and be angry. At the same time, be clear about how

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"Ask a Professional Counselor"
these differences can be shared in a respectful way.

2. Ask for and give respect.
Appreciate your children's opinions. Recognize and approve each person's uniqueness. Love and accept each person even when you don't accept what they do. Help children see how respect works in relationships. And remember-criticizing your children and demeaning them with name-calling and cursing usually backfires against the parent.

3. Learn from mistakes.
Each family member can learn more from mistakes than successes. Allow for failure and be ready to forgive. Help your children be accountable for the consequences of their choices. And saying 'I'm sorry' to your children when you need to will increase your status in their eyes.

4. What you see is what you get.
Parents are not perfect. Let children see you as human. Let your kids know what's important to you by your words and actions.

5. Real love includes limits.
Healthy limits guide and nurture children. Parents and children feel more secure when love includes limits. Limits help children feel part of the family group. Tough love includes boundaries. And it works!

6. Talk and walk your values.
Beliefs are spoken more loudly by actions than words. Children learn independence, responsibility and decision making by watching their parents. Make sure that what they are watching and hearing match.

Parenting is a training mission-especially for parents. We should pick our battles wisely and try not to lose the war over an insignificant skirmish ("I want that room cleaned now!!"). A clean room feels real important, but communication trumps a clean room every time. The sooner parents learn that kids aren't perfect (and that parents aren't perfect either), the sooner the family can use its time and energy building healthy relationships. The goal of healthy parenting is not contented children, but responsible adults.

So the next time you hear someone say, "Help! I'm a parent!" and realize that it's you, slow down, take a deep breath (or several), and realize that you have another opportunity to parent in a different and better way. The changes you see in yourself and your kids just might have you saying "Wow! I'm a parent! And ain't it great!"
Macon Housing Authority held its first on-site Job Fair on January 10, 2007 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Family Investment Center at 905 Main Street (Davis Homes community). The Job Fair attracted twenty-two employers and more than 200 customers seeking employment opportunities. Family Self Sufficiency and HOPE VI Community and Supportive Services staff planned the event to help introduce public housing residents and others to employers with positions and/or training programs available for those serious about changing or advancing their economic status. Job Fair participants also were asked to complete a survey/evaluation upon leaving the event to help MHA staff plan and develop partnerships to offer services residents need or desire.

If you are a public housing resident and need assistance to continue your employment goals, we invite you to:

1. Join MHA's Family Self Sufficiency Program by calling 752-5185 (see page 2 for more information)
2. Visit the Macon Career Center-Department of Labor (Mercer University Dr.) on Tuesdays from 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon for a Self Sufficiency Case Manager to assist you.

*Macon Housing Authority extends our appreciation to the following employers for their participation in the Job Fair:*

- Bibb County Board of Education
- Lowe's Home Improvement Stores
- Labor Ready
- Express Personnel
- City of Macon Office of Workforce Development
- Kelly Services
- Chase Staffing
- Adecco
- Waffle House
- Family Care Solutions
- Macon-Bibb Co. Fire Department
- Job Corps
- Ga. Dept of Labor & Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- IKON
- Quality Care for Children
- Macon Housing Authority
- Central Georgia Technical College
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Community Health Works
- American Profession Institute
- Shaklee Health & Wellness

Mercer Education Opportunity Center for the Resume Writing classes held during the Fair
The Macon Housing Authority’s Family Investment Center (FIC) is a one-stop resource for families who are working their way towards economic independence. Services available at the FIC include: day care, health care, social services, family counseling, job training and educational programs.

Agencies and Programs located within the Macon Housing Authority’s Family Investment Center

- Family Self Sufficiency Program- (478) 752-5097
- Sashe African Dance Ensemble- (478) 461-7602
- Economic Opportunity Council- (478) 752-5194
- Family Counseling Center- (478) 752-5177
- Georgia Anger Management Center, Inc.- (478) 752-5153
- Head Start Program- (478) 745-0960
- Central Georgia Technical College Adult Basic Education- (478) 742-9442
- Mercer University Educational Opportunity Center- (478) 752-5253
- Community Health Works- (478) 752-5013
- Rightouch Nu Vision- (478) 228-1737

Please call or stop by to learn more about the services available to you at the Family Investment Center. To schedule a tour of the FIC, please call coordinator, Rhonda Green-Barnes at (478) 752-5185
### Important Numbers

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### Neighborhood Outreach Programs

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