



Housing Wish Comes True After 10 Years

Grasping a cane, an elderly woman shuffled her way along a neighborhood sidewalk. Stopping to catch her breath on a low brick wall, she glanced across the street at an empty lot.

"One of these days, I'm going to have a house on that lot," Viola Trueluck told herself 10 years ago.

With the help of two OHFA programs, Viola finally got her wish. OHFA's Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program and Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) provided the resources to turn her dream into reality.

Last November, 72-year-old Viola moved into a new,

three-bedroom modular house on the exact spot she predicted her future home.

"One of these days, I'm going to have a house on that lot."

"I never thought it was going to happen, but I kept on saying it," she said.

Viola has always been a strong believer in faith. For 49 years, she has attended El Reno's Austin Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. All 12 of her children were baptized there, and it is where she volunteers her time doing missionary work.

"Just believe in God and he'll help you, and that's what I did," she said.

In addition to her faith in God, Viola also has faith in people.

She believed in the people helping make her dream come true, even when some people told her it would never happen.

Viola is especially thankful to Sharon Wise with Native American Housing Services, Inc. and Kathy Crittenden of OHFA.

In January of 2005, OHFA granted Native American Housing Services, Inc. \$224,100 in HOME funds to build three houses.

"They went out of their way to help me get into this house," she said. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have this place."

Viola said that as a first-time homeowner, the phrase "This is my house" has a whole new meaning for her. *(Continued on Page 2)*

"I don't have to go anywhere to wash and dry clothes."

- Viola Trueluck

VISION & MISSION

OHFA Vision:

As an industry leader, OHFA makes a difference in the lives of every Oklahoman by fulfilling housing needs and dreams.

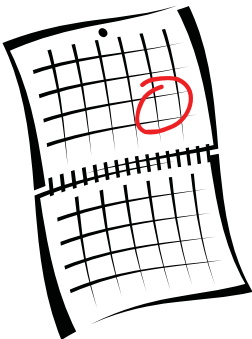
OHFA Mission:

To help place people in homes.

Rental Assistance Team Mission:

To secure funds to help eligible low income families obtain decent, safe and affordable housing, and do so while providing courteous, professional and efficient service.

Important Dates



Holidays (Offices Closed)

July 4, Independence Day
September 4, Labor Day
October 9, Columbus Day
November 10, Veterans Day

Rental Assistance In-Service Training (Rental Assistance staff unavailable)

June 7 & 8
September 13 & 14

Family Self Sufficiency Meetings

Program Coordinating Committee meetings
April 28, July 28 and October 27
Resident's Advisory Board meetings
May 26, August 25 and November 17
Realtor and lender information meeting
June 23

NEWS ON 8, Rental Assistance Newsletter
Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency
P.O. Box 26720
Oklahoma City, OK 73126
www.ohfa.org

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Ideas? Suggestions?

Do you have comments or suggestions for OHFA? Please submit them in writing to the attention of the Rental Assistance secretary or visit our website: www.ohfa.org.

Address and Telephone Number Changes

So we can better serve you, please notify your team in writing if your mailing address or telephone number changes.

Listing of Available Rentals

A nationwide listing of available Section 8 rentals can be found at www.gosection8.com. Landlords can list their available units for free.

Housing Assistance Payment Line

405-848-1144, Ext. 2898 is available to report problems with rental assistance payments. When prompted, please leave your message and a phone number where you can be reached. Please provide as much information as possible concerning the payment problem.

OHFA
Executive
Director
*Dennis
Shockley*

Phone
Number:
(405) 842-2471
(800) 256-1489
TDD: (405) 848-7471



Rental
Assistance
Director
*Deborah
Jenkins*

NEWS on 8
Newsletter
Editor
*Diana
Rogers*

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 26720
Oklahoma City, OK
73126

Street Address:
100 N.W. 63rd Street
Suite 200
Oklahoma City, OK
73116

www.ohfa.org
AA/EEO



**OHFA: Oklahoma Quality Award
Winner for Commitment**

OHFA's Administrative Plan for the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program may be viewed at our central office by appointment or at www.ohfa.org.

Free Tuition to Harvard for Students from Low-Income Families

Harvard University announced in February that any undergraduate students it admits who come from low-income families earning less than \$40,000 will receive free tuition.

To students that qualify, Harvard will waive tuition and application fees, pay for travel expenses, and make funds available, as needed, for books, winter clothing, medical and other extraordinary expenses.

"We want to send the strongest possible message that Harvard is open to talented students from all economic backgrounds," said Lawrence H. Summers, president of Harvard.



To find out more about Harvard's offer for free tuition for families making less than \$40,000 a year, visit <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/daily/0402/28-finaid.html> or call Harvard's financial aid office at (617) 495-1581.

OHFA Scores 100% on Section 8 Audit Five Years in a Row

The Rental Assistance Team achieved a perfect score during a recent Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) audit. The perfect score allowed OHFA to be designated as a "High Performer."

SEMAP is the tool used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to remotely measure Public Housing Authority performance and administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

In order to receive a "High Performer" designation, a Public Housing Authority must score a minimum of 90 points under SEMAP. OHFA has received the "High Performer" designation for the past five years.

List Your Rental Property for FREE at Gosection8.com

OHFA is now using the online listing service Gosection8.com. This allows landlords to list and update their property listing without going through a Public Housing Authority.

Gosection8.com offers landlords a listing service that maximizes rental listing exposure by allowing properties to be viewed online by prospective tenants. OHFA uses the service to provide copies of listings to families seeking Section 8 rental housing.

Gosection8.com provides additional services to landlords and tenants. Check out their website at Gosection8.com. Don't have a computer? Call 1-866-466-7328 toll free to list your property today.

...Housing Wish Comes True (continued)

"You know it's really your own," she said.

All her life Viola has gone without many small luxuries that most people take for granted. An ice maker and washer and dryer were things she always wanted but could never afford. When her house came with all new major appliances, it meant a lifestyle change for Viola. No longer does she have to drag home bags of ice from the store or call someone for a ride to the Laundromat across town.

"I don't have to go anywhere to wash and dry clothes," she said with a big smile.

Viola also doesn't have to go anywhere to see her 10 children who live in town; they come visit her. Her new house provides plenty of room for visitors. Having her children over for Christmas

in her new house signified a lifelong achievement for Viola.

"I always did want a home for them and everything just made me feel so good," she said. "I finally got my wish."

Recipients of Section 8 Rental Assistance are encouraged to apply for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program. Individuals interested in receiving more information should call Kathy Crittenden at (405) 419-8236 and leave a message with their name and mailing address.

Information on the Section 8 Homeownership Program is also available at www.ohfa.org under the Rental Assistance section.

Landlord Spotlight:**Know People and You Know Their Needs**

Malone's Property Management manages approximately 415 houses and duplexes in the Oklahoma City metro area. Despite so many rental properties, the company provides its clients with customized service by making the effort to learn personal details about each of them.

"A good landlord has good people skills and wants to get to know people so they can know their needs and fulfill them," said Leigha Cantrell, a Malone's employee.

Many clients meet Leigha when they first come to Malone's. Although she serves as administrative secretary, Leigha's job responsibilities include those usually fulfilled by landlords. She processes applications, manages the signing of leases, collects rent, and handles maintenance requests.

Knowing information about tenants and their families beyond what is listed on their applications improves the working relationships Leigha has with them.

"Overall it makes the whole landlord/tenant experience a lot easier," she said.

To assist its employees in providing the best service, Malone's uses a special computer program it designed called Propman to keep necessary information about each tenant.

For example, Tenant A's profile might include information that he sleeps during the day until 3 p.m. because he works late at night. When Tenant A calls Malone's to make a maintenance request, Leigha knows to tell the maintenance person to make the repair after 3 p.m. when Tenant A is awake.

Malone's maintains a record of Tenant A's maintenance request including the time and date of the request, the name of the maintenance person assigned to the repair, and the time and date the repair was completed.

"Anything that is particular to their home is in that computer system," Leigha said.

Malone's has 56 tenants enrolled in the Sec-



*Leigha Cantrell
Malone's Property Management*

tion 8 Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance program. Leigha said the extra 10 minutes of paperwork she fills out for those individuals gives her more time to get to know them better. She finds out about their family and sometimes their concerns based on past experiences.

From talking with tenants enrolled in the Section 8 program, Leigha learned they are not always treated with respect or given the same level of service by other landlords because they receive rental assistance.

"A Section 8 client is no different than anyone else," she said. "Instead of being an address or just money, they're a person."

For Leigha, the effort she puts into getting to know clients on a more personal level makes her job more rewarding. Her conversations with them over the phone almost always include small talk as well as business.

"It's almost like your friends calling in to say 'Hi,'" she said. "And I'm the same way with them."

requested reasonable accommodation on his lease agreement in order to ensure prompt rent payment.

The tenant asked to be allowed to pay his rent on the third Wednesday of each month, when he receives his Social Security disability payment, rather than the first day of the month so that he could avoid the \$50 late fee. When the tenant's request was denied, he filed suit, and the case was decided in his favor.

Unhappy with the judgment, the property management company later informed the tenant that it would not renew his lease. HUD has now stepped in and charged the company with violation of the Fair Housing Act.

Reasonable Accommodation Action by HUD

Source of article: www.hud.gov

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued a news release announcing that it had filed charges against a property management company in Michigan for refusing to grant a reasonable accommodation.

The case involves a disabled tenant who

Report Changes in Family Composition

Families receiving assistance through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program must report changes in family members living in the assisted unit between annual reexaminations.

Additions to the household resulting from birth, adoption or court-awarded custody must be reported before the family's next annual recertification. All other additions to the family must be approved by OHFA before they can move into the unit.

Instances when a family member moves out of a unit must be reported to OHFA within 30 days. This includes children that are leaving home to attend college, military assignments or work programs such as Job Corps. It also includes children who have been placed in DHS custody.

Family Self Sufficiency Program Now Accepting Applications

Families participating in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Rental Assistance Program can now submit an application to enroll in the Family Self Sufficiency Program. The application deadline is July 31.

Information on the FSS program can be obtained by calling Kathy Crittenden at (405) 419-8236 or Ryland Moore at (405) 419-8197.

Homeownership Fairs Planned for Lawton and Tulsa

OHFA will participate in the Lawton Coalition Housing Seminar on June 3 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Great Plains Technology Center's Worley Building.

The Oklahoma African American Homeownership Initiative will be held on June 10 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Tulsa.



Important Numbers

Rental Assistance

Recertification Team 1 (405) 419-8166
Alphabet A,D,G,H,K,M,O, and X Fax: (405) 419-9166

Recertification Team 2 (405) 419-8167
Alphabet B,C,I,J,N,P,T,U, and Y Fax: (405) 419-9167

Recertification Team 3 (405) 419-8168
Alphabet E,F,L,Q,R,S,V,W, and Z Fax: (405) 419-9168

Initial Certification Team (405) 419-8169
Fax: (405) 419-9169

Preapp Status line 1-800-898-6432
or (405) 879-6365

Local Leasing line (405) 842-2471
Toll-free Leasing line 1-800-256-1489
Fax Number (405) 879-8822

Mary Hoock (405) 419-8266
Rental Assistance Supervisor

Jack Bruce (405) 419-8218
Rental Assistance Field Supervisor

Carol Dodge (405) 419-8268
Rental Assistance Manager

John Pettis (405) 419-8230
Rental Assistance Manager

FSS/ Home Ownership (405) 419-8171

Field Agents

Field agents from the Rental Assistance Team play a vital role in making sure OHFA customers have safe and affordable places to live by conducting Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections.

- **Luanne Alexander**
North Central OK
- **Christina Christenson**
SW Oklahoma
- **Keith Cravens**
Central OK
- **Fleashia Ford**
SW Oklahoma
- **Roger Hayes**
Central OK
- **Christina Hines**
Floater Agent
- **Jack Howell**
East Oklahoma
- **Corey King**
Floater Agent
- **Rhonda Murrell**
Floater Agent
- **Philippe Jamet**
Floater Agent
- **Steve Jett**
East Oklahoma
- **Larry Keith**
SE Oklahoma
- **Kimberly Kephart**
SW Oklahoma
- **Sandy Lindsley**
East & NE OK
- **Debbie Mauldin**
Floater Agent
- **Dodie Pool**
Floater Agent
- **Mary Revard**
North Oklahoma
- **Judi Wright**
Floater Agent

June is National Homeownership Month

Homeownership will be celebrated nationwide in June during National Homeownership Month. During this time, many communities and organizations will host activities recognizing and promoting homeownership.



“For millions of individuals and families, the American Dream starts with owning a home. When families move into a home of their own, they gain independence and confidence, and their faith in the future grows. The spread of ownership and opportunity helps give our citizens a vital stake in the future of America and the chance to realize the great promise of our country.”

- George W. Bush, President of the United States of America

Down Payment Assistance Grants Available for First-time Homebuyers

OHFA has \$100,000 available in American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) funds to assist families currently receiving tenant-based rental assistance become first-time homebuyers.

ADDI funds may be used for down payment assistance and closing cost assistance. Grants will be given in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

To learn how to become eligible for ADDI funds, please call Kathy Crittenden at (405) 419-8236.

OHFA 12th in the Nation in Section 8 Homeownership Closings

In March, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a national ranking of Public Housing Authorities according to the number of closings in their Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program since the program's inception in September 2002.

OHFA was ranked 12th in the nation with 54 closings. At the top of the list was Chicago Housing Authority with 127 closings.

Rent Reasonableness Strictly Enforced

Owners receiving Section 8 rental subsidy payments are prohibited from charging higher rent for assisted units than rent charged for unassisted units. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires housing agencies to reevaluate Section 8 assisted units periodically to ensure the rent charged remains reasonable.

Housing agencies determine rent reasonableness by comparing the rent charged for assisted units with the rent charged for similar unassisted

units in the same general vicinity. The condition of the assisted unit and neighborhood conditions are major factors when reevaluating for rent reasonableness. HUD requires housing agencies to reduce the rent for Section 8 assisted units that no longer satisfy the rent reasonableness test.

Individuals with questions concerning rent reasonableness evaluations should contact Carol Dodge at (405) 419-8268 or carol.dodge@ohfa.org.