

Opera Singer Finding Voice Again

“We must constantly remember that each voice is connected to a soul that must be allowed its own individual chance to grow and be heard.” - Dr. Cynthia Karnstadt

As you walk into Dr. Cynthia Karnstadt’s room at Garden Terrace, the first thing you notice is boxes stacked high and neatly along one wall. They are the relics of a lifelong career as an opera singer and music teacher. The boxes are filled with costumes and music from operas and festivals in which Dr. Karnstadt performed all over the world, from Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center to Barcelona and Paris.

Dr. Karnstadt grew up in North Austin and discovered her love for music through the public school junior high choir. Coming from a low-income family troubled with alcoholism, she said, “Music was freedom for me.” She went on to study at The University of Texas, where she received Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Voice.

For 30 years, Dr. Karnstadt studied and performed all over the world, receiving numerous music grants and winning competitions. She came back to The University of Texas in the 1990s to pursue her Doctorate in Voice under Metropolitan Opera tenor William Lewis.

She is most proud of the Beginning Vocal Performance course she developed to teach anyone to sing. “We must constantly remember that each voice is connected to a soul that must be allowed its own individual chance to grow and be heard,” Dr. Karnstadt explains. After teaching voice at Mahidol University in Thailand in 2004-05, health problems cut short her career.

Dr. Karnstadt soon found herself fighting multiple diseases and disorders and



struggling to keep stable housing. She has lived at Garden Terrace for a year and is very grateful for her new home and support. Without Foundation Communities, she said, “I would probably be dead.”

“I love pedagogy and knowing how to teach. I want to teach again,” said Dr. Karnstadt. And with a stable home and the help she needs to face her illnesses, she’s more likely than ever to reach that goal.

New Website Debuts!

Foundation Communities announces its new home on the web, at www.foundcom.org, where you can....

- Look for an apartment
- Meet successful residents
- Sign up for our latest news
- Become a volunteer in impactful programs
- Give a gift
- Learn about our unique programs

Visit us at www.foundcom.org, and send us your ideas for keeping our site fresh and useful to you. And if you know someone who needs housing in Austin or North Texas, please send them to our new website!



Visit us
online today!
foundcom.org

Residents Share **HIGHS** and **LOWS** Together

Every week, a small group of residents at Vintage Creek Apartments gathers to discuss goals and challenges with each other under the guidance of volunteer Michael Stuart.

The residents are participants of the Children's Home Initiative (CHI) program, which provides transitional housing for up to 18 months to families who were formerly homeless or on the verge of homelessness, and applies a structured case management model that focuses on housing stability, employment/income and family well-being.

With the CHI support group led by Michael, participants know they are not alone. As residents share their challenges, the group helps them focus on their education or career goals and allows them to see how far they have come as they continue to build a brighter future.

Reflecting on what the support group experience means to him, Michael says, "It's amazing to see the spark in the eyes of residents when they are able to envision the life they want to lead and realize that success is possible."

Case manager Bernardo Fernandez, who works with CHI residents one-on-one, sees real value in the group's accomplishments. Bernardo says, "It means a great deal for CHI program participants to find neighbors who are going through the very same tough situations they are experiencing. The unconditional and mutual support for each other automatically happens in Michael's group."



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Community Tax Centers Hit *New Record*

Community Tax Centers wrapped up the busiest tax season yet, completing about 17,000 tax returns for a total of more than \$25 million returned to our local economy.

At 10 tax centers, our volunteers helped:

- return **25% more refunds** than last filing season
- secure **10% more Earned Income Tax Credits** for current-year filers vs. the same period last year for a total of more than \$9 million
- secure **21% more in Child Tax Credits** for taxpayers with children under 17 vs. the same period last year for a total of almost \$8 million



Tax Center at Goodwill

This year saw hundreds of changes in tax law for working poor families with the federal stimulus bill. Our staff is reviewing the changes and expects to help explain what the stimulus bill really means for low-income families through community education and outreach in the coming months.

Free Business Classes Offered at Foundation Communities



Are you feeling the squeeze of economic problems? Have you started your own business or are considering it? Do you know someone who is self-employed and struggling? More dislocated workers are turning to self-employment to meet basic needs. Yet, starting your own business involves much more than just coming up with an idea and selling that idea.

Our Community Tax Centers offer free business classes to any self-employed individual and small business, regardless of income. The class is particularly helpful as you start up your business.

Are you aware of common business mistakes? We can help you avoid these pitfalls:

- Failing to track all your business expenses
- Confusing the difference between contractors and employees
- Ignoring licensing and tax issues related to your business
- Forgetting to track issues related to running a home-based business
- Neglecting to track your gas mileage

Classes are available in English and Spanish at our main office at 3036 S. 1st St. For more information, contact 2-1-1 or selfemployed@foundcom.org.

BUSINESS CLASS SCHEDULE

All classes are held 6pm to 8pm

- Tuesday, June 23
- Thursday, July 23 (in Spanish)
- Tuesday, August 25
- Thursday, September 24 (in Spanish)

Greening North TX Apartments Helps Residents Save

In keeping with our continued commitment to green building, our North Texas apartments recently received substantial upgrades. Green building makes sense for affordable housing because by reducing utility and operating costs, we can keep rents low and shrink resident utility bills, helping families with low incomes stretch their dollar further.

With the help of a \$100,000 grant from the Harold Simmons Foundation, we implemented green improvements — with more upgrades planned — at all three of our North Texas communities. We collaborated with other partners, including Global Climate Strategies and TXU Energy, becoming the first multi-family project in the TXU Low-Income Energy Efficiency Program. Energy efficiency upgrades resulted in an in-kind donation of more than \$319,000 by TXU.

Energy efficiency and conservation upgrades included:

- Energy efficiency kits: Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), weather-stripping, insulation plates
- Formaldehyde-free insulation in all attic spaces
- Spray-on radiant barrier
- Solar ventilation tubes
- Programmable thermostats
- On-site recycling containers for CFL bulbs
- Solar screen installation

It is estimated that some of these measures could save each family approximately 11 percent on utility bills, with an additional 33 percent savings on heating and cooling bills if thermostats are programmed at recommended settings.

In addition, Foundation Communities is committed to effective waste management and water conservation. We are collaborating with the City of Arlington on a multi-family recycling program, through which the city is providing free education and recycling totes for each apartment unit at Sleepy Hollow to encourage recycling.

If you'd like to learn more about our Green Building program, please visit our website at www.foundcom.org/about-us/green-building



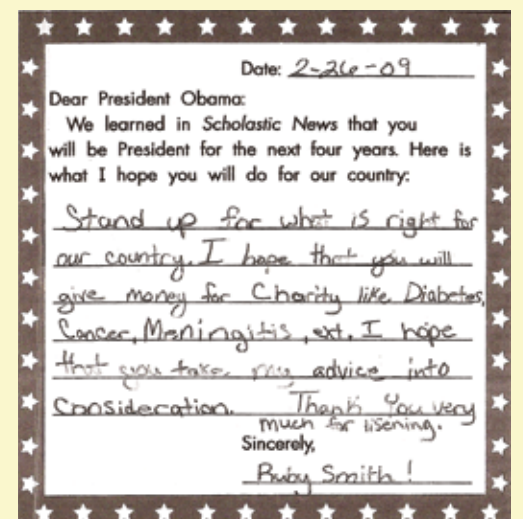
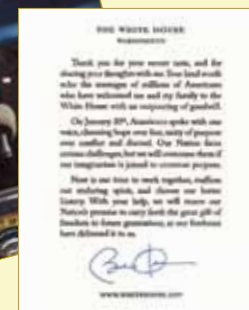
Top: Solar power vents
Middle: Solar screens
Bottom: CFL bulb

What Would You Say to the New President?

In February, kids from the after-school program at Sleepy Hollow Apartments in Arlington wrote letters to President Obama. They shared their opinions about what he should accomplish in office and were recently delighted to receive a response and photo from the President.



Sleepy Hollow's after-school students.





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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Supported by



Join Us for an Open House!

Each month, we hold a free Open House Lunch, an intimate tour and lively discussion with Executive Director Walter Moreau, board members and residents. Take a tour of one of our communities, learn about the challenges facing families and individuals with low incomes and hear the latest news on solutions that work.

2009 Open House Schedule

11:45 am – 12:45 pm
Program begins at noon

Wednesday, June 24 – Skyline Terrace

Tuesday, July 28 – Spring Terrace

Wednesday, August 19 – Skyline Terrace

Tuesday, September 22 – Sierra Ridge

Tuesday, October 27 – A Place to Call Home
LUNCHEON (location TBD)

Wednesday, December 2 – Sierra Ridge



RSVP for open houses by the day before: 512-447-2026 x17 or sadia.tirmizi@foundcom.org

Austin Communities

Buckingham Place Duplexes
512-280-5127

Cherry Creek Duplexes
512-441-6646

Crossroads Apartments
512-452-5987

Daffodil Apartments
512-385-5606

Garden Terrace
512-416-8300

Sierra Ridge Apartments
512-462-0888

Skyline Terrace
512-440-0300

Southwest Trails Apartments
512-301-2442

Spring Terrace
512-492-8980

Trails at the Park Apartments
512-280-5200

Trails at Vintage Creek Apartments
512-929-9161

Board of Directors

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North Texas Communities

Peters Colony Apartments
972-394-4162

Shadow Brook Apartments
817-461-3936

Sleepy Hollow Apartments
817-460-7822