FREE Income Tax Preparation Sites and FREE online filing

Did you know that many families are eligible for valuable tax credits every year? To get tax credits, you MUST file a tax return. FREE tax preparation and e-filing services for low-to-moderate-income residents are available. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) free tax preparation services are available at the following Norwalk locations starting Saturday, January 25, 2014 through April 12, 2014: Norwalk Community College, 188 Richards Ave., 203-857-7144, Thursdays 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM in room W138; Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM at the NCC East Campus Atrium in the UBS Student Success Center. No appointment necessary! VITA services are also available by appointment at NEON, 203-899-2420, 98 South Main St., Mondays & Wednesdays 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM; and by appointment at Family & Children’s Agency, 203-604-1230, 140 Water Street. Tax refunds filed electronically will be received quicker than filing by paper!

NHF Roll Call

Norwalk Housing Authority and the Norwalk Housing Foundation Scholarship Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to donors who so graciously responded to our request for donations that was enclosed in the annual calendar sent in December.

- Adeline Pote
- Cynthia McCoy
- Eduarda Guardado
- Graham Powell
- Kathleen Fischer
- Maria Osorio
- Marie Exantus
- Mehrnoz M. Aghili
- Nina Kruczewska
- Susan Szerszen

There is still time to donate! Send your donations of $3.00, $5.00, $10.00 or whatever you so choose to give to Norwalk Housing Authority, 24 1/2 Monroe St., Norwalk, CT 06854. Every dollar goes to a college student!

Did You See….

We have NEW envelopes for the rent statements! Payments will go to a lock box at the bank, which in turn will provide faster service for your payments.

LAST CHANCE to Sign Up For Affordable Health Insurance in 2014!

If you still currently don’t have medical insurance, there’s still time to enroll! Enrollment period ends March 31st, 2014. Sign up by March 14th to have insurance coverage effective April 1st. Connecticut’s new health insurance marketplace, Access health CT, is eligible for health care coverage. Sign up online, enroll in coverage, or find an Enrollment Center or Enrollment Fair: www.Accesshealthct.com; 1-855-464-2428; Text: HEALTH to 877877

To Better Serve You…

We are updating our tenant records; please provide any new emergency contact information as well as your email address to your Occupancy Specialist.

NHF’s GONE GREEN: SAVES 31M Gallons Water Annually

In 2003 NHA was one of the first public housing agencies in the US to take advantage of HUD’s energy reduction incentives. According to a recent report after more than a decade, the water and energy savings created by that, and a second phase project a few years ago, remain strong. The results of the first phase of work were strong enough to warrant a second phase of work that was developed and completed in September 2012. The work in both phases included measures such as heating system replacements, lighting replacement, building envelope improvements, water conservation, new domestic hot water heaters and various heating system control upgrades. These projects helped put NHA in a fortunate position to be awarded over $1.3 million in competitive American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funding. The funding was used for the installation of solar panels for electric and hot water generation at several sites. In the 12 month period in the report, NHA saved almost 31 million gallons of water and of course avoided the required sewer treatment of the same amount. The natural gas, fuel oil and electric savings over the same period can be expressed through a reduction in pounds of carbon dioxide that were not released into the atmosphere. During the corresponding 12 month period, 1.7 million pounds of carbon dioxide were not released into the air because of NHA’s actions.

Plants New Seeds At NHA!

We are very pleased to announce the promotion of Nicole Ruffin to Human Resources Specialist. Nicole has been with Norwalk Housing Authority for 11 years as an Administrative Assistant to Deputy Director, Candace Mayer and Finance Director, Thomas F. Hickey. In this new position Nicole will be in charge of personnel work for Norwalk Housing Authority staff and will work closely with Senior Management. Good luck Nicole on your new endeavor.
Many employers are using computerized systems that scan submitted resumes and applications for keywords that indicate if an applicant fits the job. Unless your resume or application is customized, you may not even be considered for the position or be reviewed by a human being. Customize your resume and include keywords used in the job description so that can be easily spotted in your resume. When applying for positions online, include keywords from the job description in the application.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER YOUR VEHICLES**

NHA Residents living at the following developments are required in their leases to register their cars in order to park in the on-site parking lots: 20 West Avenue; Chapel Street; Fairfield Avenue; Irving Freese; John Shostak; King Kennedy; Leroy Downs; Ludlow Village; Main Avenue; Meadow Gardens; Roodner Court; Seaview/Fort Point; School Street; Senior Court; Washington Village. If you do not register your car, your car may get towed. To register your car, you must bring to the NHA front desk the following 3 documents: 1) your driver’s license; 2) vehicle registration; 3) insurance. All documents must be current and in your name. At the front desk you must fill out the vehicle registration application form. *Only complete applications are accepted. You must bring all 3 proper documents at the same time.*

**Employment Tip of the Month:**

**Make it past the keyword search for online applications**

Are you constantly asking, “Where did all my money go?” For two weeks, list your expenses and their cost in a small note-book or sheet of paper, with two columns, “Items Purchased” and “Money Spent.” Track only purchases made with cash, credit, debit cards and checks. You may be surprised to see where your money is going and how you get more from your dough.

**Area Employment Opportunities**

**Register:** www.allcountyevents.com/index.php/job-seeker-registration
Date: March 4, 2014
Time: 3:30pm - 6:30pm
Location: 535 Connecticut Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854

**18th Annual Community Career Fair**

Thursday, March 13, 2014
Time: 9:00am - 2:00pm
Webster Bank Arena Concourse, 600 Main St., Bridgeport, CT
The region’s largest Community Career Fair will celebrate its 18th anniversary in 2014 with a new venue and more options than ever for employers and jobseekers. Last year more than 2,400 jobseekers and 60 employers took part.

**Norwalk Housing Authority’s Employment Opportunities**

We are hiring for the following positions:

- Accountant
- Administrative Assistant
- Alternate Van Driver
- Lead Cooks
- Early Childhood Teachers
- Assistant Teachers
- Educational Aides
- Educational Aide /afternoon receptionists
- Education Manager
- Health /Nutrition Manager

Please go to www.norwalkha.org for details on each one of these positions. Qualified candidates can complete an application at Norwalk Housing Authority, 24 ½ Monroe St., Norwalk or forward their resume to nruffi@norwalkha.org or fax to 203-838-6535. No phone calls please.

**Care 4 Kids Offers Financial Opportunities for Families**

Care 4 Kids helps low to moderate income families in Connecticut pay for child care costs. Families choose the child care provider they want for their children and family members can be paid for this service. For more details on this awesome program, please go to www.etcare4kids.com.

**Financial Management Tip of the Month:**

**Where did all my money go?**

Are you interested in a new career in the growing health care field? Learn about FREE training at Southwestern CT Health CareR’s Academy. MONDAY March 10th, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM, at Leroy Downs Community Room, 26 Monroe St. Offered through the WorkPlace, training opportunities include C.N.A., Phlebotomy, E.M.T., Pharmacy Tech, Radiation Therapist and more. Eligibility requirements are based on family income or those that have been unemployed (27 weeks or longer) and have a high school or GED Diploma. For additional information or to register, call Lisa Roger at 203-838-8471 ext. 188 or Guillermo Bendana at extension 135
Kids Love to Draw & Write About Superheroes!

Housing Authority Insurance Group (HAI) is holding its annual Playground Safety Poster and Essay Contest and the theme this year is Have No Fear—Playground Safety is Here! The contest is open to brave superheroes between the ages of 6 and 14 and HAI is counting on students to use their x-ray vision to spot things that are not safe at the playground. The best posters and essays will be chosen and winners will receive cool prizes! Turn your drawing or essay in to your Learning Center Lead Coordinator by March 25, 2014 for submission.

Change is Under Way at NHA!

- Patricia Marsden-Kish has been promoted to Educational Program Director coming from the position of Learning Center Director. Patricia held the position of Learning Center Director for 2 years and was the Choice Neighborhood Coordinator before.

- Wendy Gerbier has been promoted to Learning Center Director coming from Assistant Director of Learning Center and she has been with HAI for 2 years.

Both of these women come with a wealth of knowledge and desire to build a strong foundation for NHA students. Congratulations!

NHA Students Put Base 10 Blocks to Use!

Base ten blocks, like most mathematical manipulatives, help children understand mathematical concepts by making abstract concepts physical. Using base ten blocks help children quickly develop counting skills, providing a strong foundation for advanced mathematics. Additionally, using base ten blocks help students develop problem-solving skills and promotes working in groups, which can be beneficial in all areas of study. Below, NHA students participate in a group activity coordinated by the Math Literacy Specialists to learn factoring using Base 10 Blocks. In upcoming class sessions, the Math Specialists will use Base 10 Blocks to provide exposure to the following: Multiplying One- and Two-Digit Numbers, Division, Changing the Values of Base Ten Blocks, Representing and Working with Large Numbers and Integers.

Washington Village Educational Game Night

Washington Village Learning Center staff are always looking for new and fun ways to help students develop a love and appreciation for reading. The educational game night was an absolute success. Students broke up into small groups and each group was comprised of 1st through 5th graders. The students had to carefully read the instructions and work together as a team to figure out how to play the reading comprehension board game. Kindergarten students were introduced to sight word bingo. Sight bingo is just like regular bingo, but instead of numbers the kids have to find words on their bingo cards. The students and staff had a wonderful night and look forward to having more game nights in the future.

Drumming is The Way To Go!

Students at 20 West began a new rock drumming class. Studies have shown that drumming helps with brain development and coordination, it can also help with stress relief, improves a students’ ability to concentrate, helps increase physical stamina and can even lead to an increase in IQ scores. NHA believes this program will enhance the students learning experience as well as expose them to new opportunities.

Your Future Awaits!

College Degree = Better Job
NHA Scholarship = Money for College
Call Carla Conway for info: 203-838-8471, Ext.176
Applications due April 18th
Is your child between birth and 4 years old?

Want to know where your little one is developmentally? Want to get him/her ready for preschool? Looking for ideas of activities to do with your child? Looking for new ways to have FUN with your toddler? Parents are their child’s first and most influential teachers. Our Parent Educators will arrive with toys, games, free books and snack to engage your little ones in educational activities. Children learn through play. Personal visits can take place in your home or other designated location. Please contact Autier Allen Craft for more information at acraft@norwalkha.org or 203-644-4720.

NHA College Corner
The 2014 NHF Scholarship Application is available at NHA office front desk and on NHA website or by email. Contact Carla Conway to get on the application list so you can learn of other scholarships. Phone: 203-838-8471, ext. 176. Free help with applications and essays is available with Will Peter at NHA’s 20 West Learning Center. Applications due April 18.

FEDERAL FAFSA Deadline is by Midnight Central Time June 30th, 2014. The Federal Award is up to $5,550 and is income based. If you get the State Award, that will be deducted from the Federal Award. The most is $5,550.

High school students in all grades should prepare early for college. Contact Carla Conway to start preparing for college in lower grades.

Now is the time college scholarships are becoming available. You should contact the NAAACP and go online to: 100bmos.com for scholarships. Community service is important. So contact 100 Black Men of Stamford and other organizations with scholarships about what community service activities are acceptable.

General Art Class Returns To The Learning Centers
New staff member, Thomas Radovich, has brought general art back to the Norwalk Housing Learning Centers! Every week Mr. Tom visits each Learning Center and gives students an opportunity to participate in a generalized art class where they can express their artistic passions. So far, students have drawn animals that represent their unique personalities, depicted winter scenes in celebration of the season, practiced still life drawing and shading, and created illustrated collages inspired by the “Horror Vacui” style which encourages artists to densely fill the entire space of a piece of artwork. As the pictures become clearer and more colorful, you see the students smiles get bigger. Each student shines because they have the opportunity to express their own unique style and showcase their art skills to the group. Mr. Tom plans on beginning a second art class shortly, which will be directed towards the more advanced students who show a particular passion for artistic expression.

Left front to right front) Aniyia Prince (1st grade), Samuel Bosquet (4th Grade), Benita Moono (Kindergarten), Tyleah Simms (1st grade), Thomas Radovich (NHA Art Teacher), Samantha Garcia (4th Grade), Kamora Prince (4th Grade), Lilly Feliciano (5th Grade), and Emani Watkins (1st grade).

Colonial Village’s Scholar Athlete
Among all the wonderful and bright students that attend the Colonial Village Learning Center, this month we take the time to highlight Justin Oliver. Justin is a student not only excelling in academic achievement, but also performing exceptionally well in his athletic endeavors. Justin Oliver is at the top of his class in relation to both “Vmath” and “Ticket to Read”, two online educational programs used at the learning centers to help children develop better reading and math skills. Justin is also highlighted on News12 Connecticut for his football team’s first place victory in the state tournament held in Bridgeport. Students at Colonial Village are exposed to a wide variety of activities geared to match their particular interests. We are proud of the accomplishments of Justin Oliver and hope he will motivate other students to reach their full potential.

Justin Oliver is all smiles as he holds the Connecticut State Trophy in football

Is your child between birth and 4 years old?

Want to know where your little one is developmentally? Want to get him/her ready for preschool? Looking for ideas of activities to do with your child? Looking for new ways to have FUN with your toddler? Parents are their child’s first and most influential teachers. Our Parent Educators will arrive with toys, games, free books and snack to engage your little ones in educational activities. Children learn through play. Personal visits can take place in your home or other designated location. Please contact Autier Allen Craft for more information at acraft@norwalkha.org or 203-644-4720.