

GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy

The GRHC is partnering with the GVSU Kirkhof College of Nursing to bring an on-site Health Center to Mount Mercy Apartments. The goals are to expand residents' access to health care and address safety issues. Details on page 3!

Senior "Art Fest" Competitions

Resident artists and artisans from four GRHC senior housing communities shared their artistic talents during friendly fall art competitions that featured a wide variety of media. Details on pages 4-5!

Special Event Honors GRHC Partners

The GRHC Resident Services team hosted our fifth annual "Thanks for Giving" event to recognize the dozens of organizations and volunteers who support our residents and agency. Details on page 7!

GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION

SPRING 2019

NEWS



The Rental Assistance Center is located within the Campau Commons Community Center, 821 South Division Avenue.

New Service Offers Rental Readiness Program to Low-Income Families

The Rental Assistance Center that's a joint effort of the Grand Rapids Housing Commission (GRHC) and the City of Grand Rapids opened in December, offering rental readiness services to low-income households that have had a rental housing application denied by the property owner. Administered by the GRHC and funded by the City, the Center is located within the Community Center at Campau Commons Apartments, 821 South Division Avenue in Grand Rapids.

Program Eligibility

Rental Assistance Center services are available free of charge to any Grand Rapids resident who earns 80 percent or less of the Area Median Income:

Family Size	Maximum Income	Family Size	Maximum Income
1	\$39,150	5	\$60,400
2	\$44,750	6	\$64,850
3	\$50,350	7	\$69,350
4	\$55,900	8	\$73,800

How the Rental Readiness Program Works

- A program application is available at the Rental Assistance Center or can be submitted online at www.rentReadyGR.org.
- The applicant attends a program orientation event.
- GRHC social work professionals process the applicant's paperwork, obtain and analyze a credit report and assess barriers to rental readiness.
- The applicant attends a private consultation to develop a Rental Readiness Plan. The applicant may be referred to employment services or resources that include workshops offered through the Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF), the Grand Rapids Urban League, West Michigan Works and other GRHC partners.
- Referred households complete workshops on such topics as...
 - » Employment and income, résumé building
 - » Credit and budgeting
 - » How to be a good tenant, landlord rental criteria
 - » The housing search process

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*(Rental Assistance Center Opens,
continued from first page)*

- GRHC staff help the applicant assemble a portfolio of the documents needed to complete a rental application.
- The applicant earns a Rental Readiness Certificate that's valid for 90 days. The certificate and rental readiness portfolio demonstrate to prospective landlords that the applicant is qualified and ready to rent.

Benefits to the Renter

- Free service gives the household seeking to rent a competitive advantage in a tight rental housing market.
- Online application makes getting started easy.
- Households gain insight into the factors that may impede their ability to rent.
- Households that are not "rental ready" are linked with resources that can help reduce barriers to renting.

Benefits to the Rental Property Owner

- Offers a clearinghouse for landlords searching for renters, available at no cost to the property owner.
- Renters are pre-screened to meet standard rental property industry criteria related to credit, income, rental history and criminal history. All screening complies with Fair Housing standards.
- Saves the time, expense and hassle of administering the preliminary stages of applicant screening.
- Supports compliance with the 2018 City of Grand Rapids ordinance related to residential rental application fees.



For more information:
www.rentReadyGR.org

Section 8 Homeownership Program Orientations

The GRHC offers a Section 8 Homeownership program that makes it possible for eligible Section 8 program participants to use their rental subsidy toward home mortgage payments.

Requirements to participate in the Homeownership program:

- The prospective home owner must have been in the GRHC's Section 8 program for at least one year.
- Must be a first-time home buyer.
- Must have maintained full-time employment for at least the past year (waived for disabled applicants).
- Must be in good standing with the current landlord and the GRHC.

Participants in the GRHC's Family Self-Sufficiency Program have priority status for this program.

Ready to learn more?

The GRHC will host several Section 8 Homeownership program orientation meetings this year; all will be held at 2:00 p.m. at Wyoming Public Library, 3350 Michael Avenue SW in Wyoming.

Upcoming orientation dates:
6/18 * 9/17 * 12/10

For a program application and more information: www.grhousing.org/homeowner.html.

Towel Drive for Hope Community Rapid Re-Housing



Forest Hills Presbyterian Church members Mimi Cole and Michele Langejans deliver the donated towels.

Forest Hills Presbyterian Church recently organized a towel drive in support of Hope Community Rapid Re-Housing program. The drive yielded nine laundry baskets filled with more than 90 towels; these will be included in the "welcome" baskets provided to new residents. Thank you!

Hope Community serves homeless women and children. While the program is funded in part by a Supportive Housing Grant, we rely on community donors and volunteers for many essential goods and services. To learn how you or your organization can help, please call (616) 235-2893.

Scholarship Competition Is Underway!

GRHC residents who are college bound or currently attending an accredited college, university or vocational school have a chance to win a scholarship of up to \$2,000!

Established in 2000 in memory of longtime Housing Commissioner Jean McKee, the Resident Scholarship program offers college scholarships to participants in GRHC housing programs. Scholarship winners receive \$500 per year for up to four years, for a total scholarship award of up to \$2,000. Since the program's inception, the GRHC has awarded a total of \$36,000 in scholarships.

Eligibility requirements:

- Applicant must have been a resident of a GRHC housing program for the past year.
- Applicant must be sponsored by a GRHC employee who will confirm that the applicant's household is in good standing with the GRHC in accordance with our housing policies.
- Open to graduating high school seniors, current college or vocational school students, and adult residents seeking to begin or return to college or vocational school. Graduating high school seniors and Family Self-Sufficiency Program participants will receive priority status.
- Applicants who are graduating high school seniors and those currently attending college must have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 (C+ letter grade).
- Applicants seeking to return to college or vocational school must provide an official high school or college transcript which demonstrates that the applicant is a high school graduate and had a cumulative high school or college GPA of at least 2.5.
- Must attend an accredited vocational school, community college, college or university as a full-time student.
- Scholarship winners are eligible to renew the scholarship annually for up to four years. Continuing requirements of scholarship winners:
 - Must maintain a cumulative 2.5 GPA.
 - Must maintain full-time enrollment.

Complete information about the Jean McKee Resident Scholarship program and application requirements are available at www.grhousing.org.

Application deadline: May 20, 2019

New GVSU Health Center at Mount Mercy



A GVSU nursing student checks the blood pressure of a Mount Mercy Apartments resident.

The GRHC is partnering with the GVSU Kirkhof College of Nursing to bring a dedicated on-site Health Center to the senior residents of Mount Mercy Apartments. Slated to open this spring, the center is funded by a two-year grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, with the GRHC providing the necessary facility modifications to house new patient exam and reception rooms.

Services provided at the new Health Center will be spearheaded by Doctor of Nursing Practice-level faculty and will be overseen by a medical doctor. Residents will receive coordinated care offered through teams that include GVSU nursing faculty and students as well as faculty and students from physical therapy, occupational therapy, clinical dietetics and social work disciplines.

The Health Center represents an expansion of an award-winning partnership between the Housing Commission and the Kirkhof College of Nursing; nursing staff and students have been providing health screenings, health interventions and educational events to our residents since 2014. The center will work to improve access to health care and early preventive services, address safety in the home and ultimately optimize residents' ability to successfully age in place. The collaboration also provides valuable clinical experience to GVSU students who are pursuing medical careers.

The Mount Mercy Health Center will eventually be available to other seniors within Greater Grand Rapids, and GVSU will open a similar Health Center at Reflections, a 60-unit senior housing community managed by Dwelling Place.

GRHC Seniors Share Their Artistic Talents During “Art Fest” Competitions

Resident artists and artisans from four GRHC senior developments entered friendly on-site “Art Fest” competitions this fall, with media ranging from graphite, crayon and oils to textiles, leather and clay. This event has become an annual treat for residents of Leonard Terrace and Mount Mercy Apartments, and inaugural competitions were launched this year at Adams Park and Ransom Tower Apartments.

Dozens of neighbors, family and friends stopped by each development to view the many works on display and to vote for their favorites. Competition winners received a gift card and many compliments on their talent, skill and creativity.

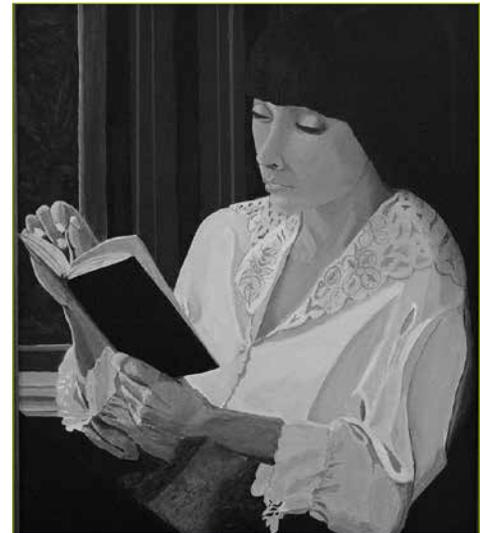
Thanks to Life EMS for funding gift cards at Leonard Terrace, and kudos to all of the Art Fest entrants for sharing their talents as well as many interesting and inspiring stories about their work and creative process.



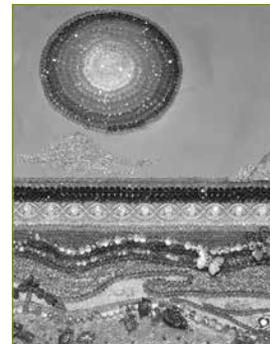
Mount Mercy artist Herman Blackmon (left) describes a process for designing a t.

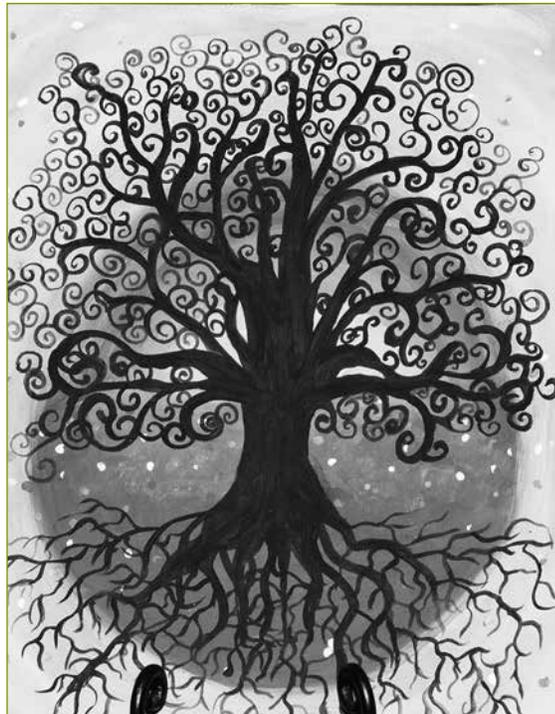


Leonard Terrace resident Sandy Waters sews one of the many colorful seasonal skirts she designs.



Right: Leather artist Mike Favreau shared that his creative process included replacing some hemp stitching that was eaten by a pet bird.





Leonard Terrace resident Shelley Wisdom makes lovely angels to top holiday trees.

Leonard Terrace resident Sher Myers shows a landscape painted on the back of a recycled chalkboard; she created the painting as part of the set for the locally produced short movie "The Projectionist." Sher also exhibited a colorful patchwork quilt she made for her parents over a 15-year period.



The "My Tree" art installation by Mount Mercy artist Brenda Evans was inspired by her childhood. Brenda recalls dressing her Chihuahua Penny in a scarf and playing under a tree in her family's backyard while enjoying a basket of snacks brought out by her mother.

GRHC Human Resources Update

Welcome, New Staff!

Shakerah McRae is a new Section 8 Coordinator. Prior to joining the GRHC staff, Shakerah was a Field Representative with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in East Orange, New Jersey. She has several professional certifications and five years of experience working with clients.

Salina Marshall Mondy is a new Section 8 Coordinator. Salina comes to our agency from the State of Michigan where she was employed as a Service Specialist. She has more than ten years of experience working in customer service.

Amanda Rogowski is a new Section 8 Coordinator. Prior to joining our team, Amanda was a Project Coordinator/Account Assistant with Haley & Aldrich Inc. She has more than seven years of experience working in customer service and data entry.

Seniors Enjoy Holiday Movie Outing



A group of 35 residents and Resident Services staff from the GRHC's senior housing developments enjoyed a fun afternoon at the movies where the group watched the holiday classic "The Nutcracker" together.

Many thanks to Celebration Cinema for providing discounted ticket and snack pricing and to Hope Network for donating transportation to a resident group.

Nutrition Education at Adams Park



Adams Park Apartments residents enjoyed a fall "Cooking Matters" cooking class led by an MSU Extension nutrition education professional. The free six-week course was held in the senior development's community room and included presentations about planning and preparing healthy meals on a budget as well as healthy snacking tips, cooking demonstrations and group cooking activities.



Our residents and staff thank MSU Extension for helping to make enjoying a healthful diet easy, delicious and fun.



“Thanks for Giving” Event Honors Community Partner Organizations & Volunteers

The GRHC Resident Services team hosted our fifth annual “Thanks for Giving” event to celebrate the wonderful community organizations and volunteers who regularly support our resident services efforts. The mid-November celebration featured a reception, lunch and service awards. Thanks to all who joined us for this special event. As always, we are very grateful to all of our partners for their support!



ICCF Intake Specialist Amber Jones (left) and ICCF Education Manager Berniz Constanza Terpstra (right), with GRHC Resident Services Specialist Wanda Couch and Lead Resident Services Specialist Laura Oesch.

Alpha Women’s Center
 Aqua Perfection
 Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
 Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired
 Baby Scholars
 Aimee Baskovic
 Baxter Community Center
 Baxter Neighborhood Association
 Beckwith Hills Christian Reformed Church
 Boston Square Christian Reformed Church
 Bridge Street House of Prayer
 Calvin College
 Calvin College Department of Nursing
 Campus Elementary School
 Care Resources
 CINTAS
 City of Grand Rapids
 City of Grand Rapids Mobile GR & Parking Svcs
 Clancy Street Ministries
 Comcast
 Comprenew
 Covenant House Academy
 Ron Cuson
 Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services
 Dean Transportation
 Bill & Sandi DeBruyn
 Delaware Manor
 Department of Health & Human Services
 DHHS/Santa Claus Girls
 Disability Advocates of Kent County
 Effex Management Solutions
 Marcia Everette
 Express Employment Professionals
 Family Outreach Center
 Feed My People Ministry
 Feeding America West Michigan Food Bank
 Fellowship Chapel Kids Club
 First United Methodist Church, Richard Johnson
 Forest Hills Presbyterian Church
 Forge Industrial Staffing
 Pastor David French

Kurt & Margaret Freund
 Friends of Grand Rapids Parks
 Fuller Avenue Christian Reformed Church
 Maria Goodfellow
 Grace Hill Church
 Dr. Meridell Gracias
 Grand Rapids Police Department
 Grand Rapids Public Schools
 Grand Rapids Red Project
 Grand Rapids Symphony Scorecard Program
 Grand River Aseptic Manufacturing
 Grand Valley State University
 GRPS/USDA Summer Meals Program
 GVSU Kirkhof College of Nursing
 Head Start for Kent County
 Home Instead Senior Care
 Hometown Pharmacy
 Hurst Mechanical
 Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF)
 Indian Trails Walmart Shuttle
 Kent County Community Action
 Kent County Health Department
 Kent School Services Network
 LaGrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church
 Life EMS
 LINC Community Revitalization
 Mainstreet Association
 Making Choices Michigan
 Manpower
 Pastor Ron Marckini
 Meals On Wheels of Western Michigan
 Meridian Health
 Michigan Dept. of Health & Human Services
 MOKA
 MSU Extension
 National Kidney Foundation
 Neighbors of Belknap Lookout

New Hope Baptist Church
 New St. Mark Baptist Church
 Notions Marketing
 Oakdale Park Christian Reformed Church
 One in Christ Ministries
 Project Fresh
 Samaritas
 SECOM
 Seeds of Promise
 Senior Neighbors
 Senior Nursing Care Services
 Senior Sing A-Long
 Simply a Loving Touch (SALT)
 Emily Sluiter
 Speedway
 St. Alphonsus Church
 St. John’s United Church of Christ
 St. Luke A.M.E. Zion Church
 St. Robert of Newminster Parish
 James Trimble
 Two Men and a Truck
 United Health Care
 Unity Christian High School
 University of Detroit Mercy
 Urban League of West Michigan
 Urban Pharm
 Richard Vargas
 Volunteer Management Assn. of West Michigan
 Volunteers in Service
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“What Home Means to Me” Partners Bring Holiday Cheer to Seniors



Congratulations to Brooklyn Harris, winner of our 2019 NAHRO “What Home Means to Me” Poster Contest! Brooklyn received a Winner’s Certificate and a \$25 gift card, and the other local entrants received a Certificate of Participation. All local entries have been sent to Michigan NAHRO for judging in the state “What Home Means to Me” Poster Contest, and state winners will go to the regional contest; regional contest winners will be sent to the national contest for a chance to win an iPad and a trip to Washington, D.C.

Many thanks to all of the talented young residents who shared their thoughts about home with us!



The GRHC salutes the many local businesses, schools and volunteers who helped to brighten the winter holidays for our residents!

Hurst Mechanical celebrated the season by treating Mount Mercy Apartments residents to a festive holiday lunch. The catered feast was served by friendly Hurst employee volunteers. The company also gave 30 residents in need a holiday gift card. Senior Sing A-long singer/guitarist Marty Miller donated a fantastic musical performance to this event.

Unity Christian High School students hosted a holiday party for the residents of Adams Park Apartments, with festivities that included gifts and refreshments.

We appreciate the long-standing support of these generous and kind community partners!



Mount Mercy holiday lunch, pictured top to bottom: Hurst Mechanical volunteers serve up a feast; Marty Miller entertains; residents enjoy the festivities.

Grand Rapids Housing Commissioners:

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