



April 2010

Newsletter

Dreams Begin Here

The Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) recently purchased a single family home in the town of Lost Nation. This home is currently in the rehabilitation process.

Once finished, the home will feature completely new walls, ceilings, flooring, cabinets, kitchen appliances, and bathroom fixtures. In addition, the home has already had new siding and a new roof installed. To purchase this home, your household's gross annual income must be at or below 80% of the county's median income level. Contact Carl Reimer at either (563) 556-4166 or (800) 942-4648 for more information regarding this home, and to see if you qualify in accordance with the income levels for this home.



Family and Home Ownership Program

Make the decision to begin planning to own your own home! Enroll in the Family and Home Ownership Program today to start working with a staff member of the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority.

Once enrolled in the Family and Home Ownership Program, participants can expect to meet with a staff member of the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) who will assist them in setting realistic goals that will help prepare them to purchase a home. Examples of these goals are credit repair counseling, creating and maintaining a household budget, locating and maintain employment and reliable transportation, and more!

To qualify for this program, you must currently be receiving Section 8 rental assistance through the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority, or currently be residing in a Public Housing unit, owned by the Housing Authority.

For more information regarding this program, please contact Carl Reimer at either (563) 556-4166 or (800) 942-4648.

EIRHA Awarded \$11,099 For Water Project

The Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) was recently awarded an I-JOBS Improved Green Urban Stormwater Best Management Practices grant in the amount of \$11,099.00 from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The grant funds received by EIRHA will be used to construct a rain garden in the city of Dyersville at the Mercy Park Villa Apartments, which is a 14-unit Public Housing complex owned and operated by the EIRHA. The installation of a rain garden at the Mercy Park Villa Apartment site will divert an estimated 121,600 gallons of storm water runoff annually; significantly reducing the amount of pollutants entering local streams and groundwater. The installation of this rain garden is anticipated to begin in July 2010, and be fully completed by September 2010.

if you have questions about anything contained in this newsletter, please contact:

Mindy Wiley, Family Support Coordinator
at 563.588.1963 or toll-free at 1.877.588.1963

Mindy Meyers, Family Support Coordinator
at 563.556.5013 or toll-free at 1.877.656.5013



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Self-Sufficiency Programs

The Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority has a Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) for persons on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, as well as for persons living in the EIRHA's Public Housing units.

On the Family Self-Sufficiency program, participants create several goals with an FSS Coordinator to help reach the goals in their lives. Examples of these goals could include:

- Finding employment
- Obtaining a GED
- Locating daycare assistance
- Improving credit scores
- Budgeting finances
- Working toward home ownership

Not only do FSS program participants benefit from working toward the goals in their lives, there is a possible financial incentive as well.

For more information or to enroll in the FSS program please call Mindy Meyers if you are on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program at (563) 556-5013 or 877-656-5013. If you are a resident at EIRHA's Public Housing units contact Mindy Wiley at (563) 588-1963 or (877) 588-1963.

Resident Advisory Board

One of the goals of the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) is to have more Public Housing residents involved in the Resident Advisory Board. On this board, members are given an opportunity to voice their opinions on the types of activities EIRHA provides for tenants, and to voice any concerns related to EIRHA. For more information call Mindy Wiley at (563) 588-1963 or (877) 588-1963.

Community Service

HUD PIH Notice 2003-17 requires all non-exempt adult Public Housing residents to participate in eight hours of community service and/or economic self sufficiency activities per month. Exempt residents include those over the age of 62, disabled individuals, working individuals, and those in compliance with the requirements of a state FIP (welfare) program.

Staff of the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority have contacted affected households and are monitoring their activity for compliance.

Activities for the Elderly/Disabled

The Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) is planning activities for Public Housing residents who are currently residing in the elderly/disabled complexes owned by the Housing Authority. Activities have included trips to: Dubuque River Museum and Aquarium, Dubuque Museum of Art, Maquoketa Ohnward Fine Arts Center, Dubuque Festival of Trees, Reflections in the Park, and more!

Transportation through the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and any necessary admission fees for planned activities are paid for by the EIRHA. If you currently reside in a complex for the elderly and/or disabled owned by EIRHA, watch your mail for an invitation to the next scheduled activity!

Tenant Protection

Are you protected by renter's insurance? If not, EIRHA urges you to consider purchasing a policy. Renter's insurance can provide protection for your personal property along with personal liability protection. Policies can be inexpensive, especially when combined with other insurance policies, such as automobile insurance. You can obtain a variety of quotes by visiting the following website: www.answerfinancial.com. You can also check your local yellow pages for insurance agencies. By shopping around, you can find the best policy for your needs.

current public housing vacancies

Elderly one-bedroom units in:
Bellevue, 207 S. 2nd Street, #1 & #2
Manchester, 912 E. Main Street, #109
Miles, 31 Forest Street, #5

Family units in:
Delmar, 212 Lincoln Avenue,
2 bedroom SFH

Hopkinton, 403 Culver Rd.,
2 bedroom duplex

Preston, 511 St. Joseph Street,
3 bedroom SFH

The Residents' Corner

2010 Census – It's Kind of a Big Deal

In March 2010, Census questionnaires will be sent to everyone in the United States. Here are a few reasons why it's important to complete the form:

- 1) It's the law – All people are required by law to respond to the Census questionnaire.
- 2) It's confidential – The 2010 Census will require answering only 10 questions and all information gathered is confidential and stays within the Census Bureau. Your answers are not shared with other governmental agencies such as immigration, taxing authorities or law enforcement.
- 3) It means more money for your community – Census data helps determine the allocation of federal funds for community services, such as school lunch programs, senior citizen centers, where new hospitals and roads will be built, and other federal programs, like housing.

When the form comes to you in the mail and you have questions about it or need help completing it, you may contact Mindy Wiley at 563-588-1963.

Tips When Meeting Census Workers

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, when meeting individuals claiming to be U.S. Census workers so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft.

The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is underway as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is - how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? The Better Business Bureau offers the following advice:

- If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering

their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

- Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

Complete information is available from the Better Business Bureau Web site: www.bbb.org.

Spending Your Tax Refund Wisely

Oftentimes there are many things we find ourselves wanting to do with any extra money we receive that we forget some of the more important matters that need to be taken care of, especially once a tax refund check arrives and we take it straight to the bank.

Make a plan:

- Take the time to review your circumstances and your finances before your check arrives - think about your options.
- Approximately 50% of taxpayers report they are planning to pay down debts with their tax refunds, and that's an excellent thing to do with any extra funds you receive throughout the year. Paying down debt will not only save you money in interest charges, but it will also lower your total monthly payments and provide a better cushion for meeting your monthly living expenses, therefore helping you to stop accruing more debt.
- Make a list with two categories, "needs" and "wants." Then prioritize your options on each side and try to take care of as many "need" items as you can, before spending all your money on your "want" items.

Information from: betterbudgeting.com

Almond Strawberry Salad

All You Need:

- 3 cups fresh baby spinach
- 1/2 cup sliced fresh strawberries
- 1/4 cup sliced honey-roasted almonds
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar

All You Do:

In a large bowl, combine the spinach, strawberries and almonds.

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the vinegar, honey and sugar; shake well.

Drizzle over salad and toss to coat. Serve

immediately. Information from: allrecipes.com

The Kid Zone

Spring Cleaning With Kids

Spring cleaning is on the horizon, and you could use some help. Many hands make light work ... so how do you get the kids to pitch in when it's time to spring-clean the house? Try these five tips to involve children with housecleaning chores:

Think teamwork

Paired with a parent, even a 5-year-old can help clean safely and happily. Ideas for little helpers in the bathroom include scrubbing the sink, polishing the fixtures, or emptying the trash depending on the child's age. Working as a team involves kids in the cleaning process, helps them learn cleaning skills, and most important, models both the attitude and the job standard you're trying to teach.

Take Your Voice Out of the Process

Children have an innate ability to "tune out" parents when the subject is chores. What parent wants to spend a Saturday nagging, threatening, and yelling? Instead, post a list of the day's jobs, or write them out on index cards. Divvy the jobs up between "teams," or let each "team" choose one until the work is done.

Make Time Fly with Media Motivators

Playing upbeat music or an exciting audio-book keeps spirits high and dust cloths moving. For maximum motivation, let each helper choose his or her tunes throughout the day.

Delegate "Big Jobs" to Teens

Once adolescence hits, working with a parents loses its appeal. Solution? Delegate big, but safe, jobs to teenage children. Whether they clean and organize the garage, shampoo the living room carpet, or restore order to a jumbled linen closet, they'll take pride in their work IF you truly let them own the job.

Reward Hard Work

Spring cleaning is no one's idea of a good time, so plan a reward for your little workers. When the chores are done, schedule a family treat. Whether it's pizza for lunch or a trip to the video store, you'll get better results – and sweeten attitudes – if there's a payoff at the end of the day.

Information from: organizedhome.com

Spring Sun Safety

Spring time can be a fun time for kids to play outside. The temperatures are mild and you don't usually have to worry about mosquitoes. Parents who wouldn't think of sending their kids outside during the summer without a heavy coating of a sunscreen might forget about sunscreen on those first few sunny days in early spring. This can lead to the first sunburn of the season, and since every sunburn increases your child's risk of skin cancer later in life, even one sunburn is too many.

Here are some tips on minimizing sun damage:

- Find a sunscreen that offers UVA and UVB protection and has an SPF of 15 or higher
- Apply the sunscreen in a thick coat at least 30-45 minutes before going outside and re-apply every two hours (or more often if your child is swimming or perspiring heavily)
- Apply sunscreen even if your child is wearing clothing – most clothing only has an SPF of 5-9, so your child can still get sun damage even with a shirt on
- Limit exposure to the sun when it is at its strongest – usually between 10 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Protect your child's eyes with sunglasses that protect against UVA and UVB radiation
- Use sunscreen daily, even if it is cloudy, since most of the sun's radiation penetrates clouds and can still cause sunburn

Information from: www.keepkidshealthy.com

Spring Nest

For a festive and delicious reminder that spring has arrived, help your children make a spring nest!

All You Need:

- 1 large can of chow mein noodles
- 4 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 teaspoons shortening
- "Peeps" (marshmallow chicks)
- Egg-shaped candy (i.e. jelly beans, M&Ms, etc.)

All You Do:

Melt the chocolate chips and shortening in a glass bowl in the microwave. Stir frequently to avoid burning. Pour in the noodles and stir until coated. Drop large spoonfuls on dessert paper plates. Let kids form into "nests." Add candy eggs and "Peeps" marshmallow chicks as desired. Place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to harden. Enjoy! Makes 6-7 nests.

Information from: dltk-kids.com