



VIEW

POINT

FALL 2001

NEWS FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Thanks for putting our vouchers to use!

Last issue, we reported that we had issued over 2,000 new vouchers, asking you to be on the lookout for families hoping to rent. We are pleased to report that nearly half of these vouchers have been put to use since then, thanks to those of you who added more Section 8 renters.

Among families benefiting from the new vouchers were the Rayas. Anelle and Juan Raya have three children, ages nine, four, and one. Juan is the breadwinner for the family, earning a decent \$11-an-hour

as insurance clerk—but it currently takes around \$20 to afford the average apartment. The family was on the Section 8 waiting list for nine years before they received their voucher this summer. They had been living in a cramped, one-bedroom apartment, paying more than half of their income for rent. “I was really happy to get a voucher, but I was also nervous, because we only had 120 days to find a place,” said Anelle, who launched her family’s housing search by going

through the yellow pages. Her efforts paid off when she found a three-bedroom apartment, and she recruited a new owner into the Section 8 program in the process. “I told him how the Housing Commission has a zero tolerance policy for renters who have a drug or violent crime history, and that there was hardly any paperwork. Plus, he saw we were a good family—so he agreed to take us. Our rent is \$1,285, but our part is only \$436. It’s such a relief knowing we have enough to make the payment each month,” said Anelle.



Anelle and Juan Raya found a home for their family this summer. Their search for an apartment started in the yellow pages and ended with recruiting a new owner into the Section 8 program.

Would you like to raise the rent? Our free workshop shows you how

Our next workshop, “Rent Increase how-to’s,” will take place Wednesday, December 5, 2–4 p.m, at the San Diego Housing Commission main office, 1625 Newton Avenue, San Diego, Calif. 92113. To sign up or for more information, please call Lynda Taylor, (619) 578-7680.

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Section 8 improvements convince owners to “stick with the program”

Veta and Woody

When rental property owner Veta Mercer learned the Housing Commission had been working to improve the Section 8 program, she decided to add five more units to the program, bringing her total up to 19.

“The changes have been so helpful! The rent amounts are more like what the market is. And when I’m ready to rent to someone, everything is so fast now. I am particularly impressed with how quickly they do inspections,” said Veta.

Veta and her husband John (“Woody”) Woodruff are retired education professionals who are now full-time property managers. They own 36 rental units—all single family homes and duplexes located in central areas of the city, including North Park and east San Diego. He handles the “handyman” aspects, she does the bookkeeping and interaction with tenants. The latter part is Veta’s favorite part of



Veta Mercer and her husband John “Woody” Woodruff—shown here with tenant Dellah Minor and her daughter Tiphani—are encouraged to take more vouchers because of improvements to the program.

participating in the Rental Assistance program. “We’ve always enjoyed helping people—that’s what this program is all about—but I’m really glad that it’s easier now. The next time we get a vacancy, I hope to add more Section 8 tenants,” said Veta.

Juan Hernandez

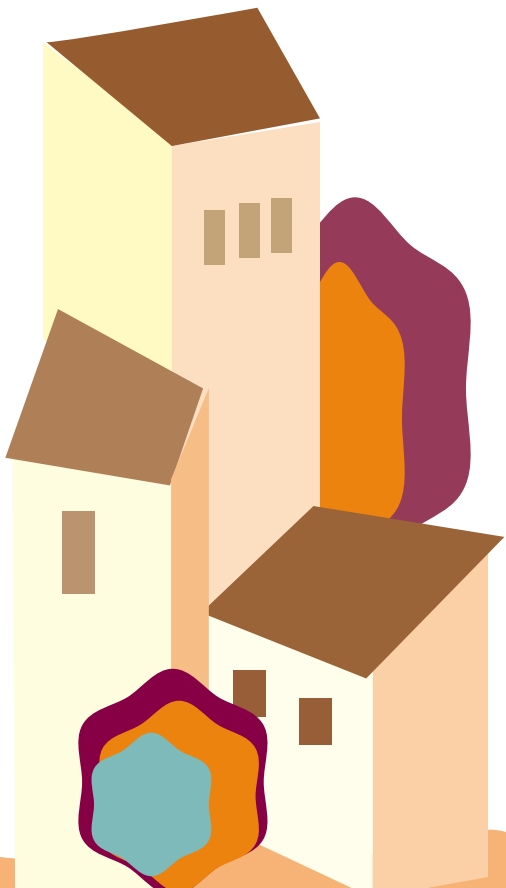
Juan Hernandez had been an owner in the Section 8 program for a few years. He has two rental properties on Broadway in the community of South Park, one of which he had been renting to a family with a voucher. He confesses he was thinking about quitting the program whenever the family moved out, as he was worried he would lose money if he had to wait weeks to get his lease approved. “Then I got a pamphlet in the mail about what the Housing Commission was calling its new, ‘fast-track program’. So I decided to give it another shot and found out they

were going out of their way more than ever for owners. I ended up renting to another Section 8 family. Everything was quicker and smoother than before, even the inspection. My gas heater and smoke detector weren’t working, but they showed me what to do, then they came out the very next day to pass the inspection.”

Rental Assistance program takes the “fast track”!



To learn more about recent improvements to the Section 8 program, please contact owner liaison Lynda Taylor at 619/578-7680; lyndat@sdhc.org.



Inspection Notes Tips for Water Heater Safety



If you have recently replaced a water heater and it is located in a garage, here are some tips to help you pass your next inspection and help keep your tenants and property safe:

- Make sure it is earthquake strapped
- Water heater should be on a platform at least 18" above the floor
- Check to see that the pressure relief valve discharge line is directed downward and that it is no less than 6" long and no more than 24" off the floor

Get help with repairs...and leasing up

If you own an apartment complex in need of repairs, and would like help fixing it up in exchange for renting to families with Section 8 (or providing lower rents), the Housing Commission has several programs that might interest you, including:

Zero-interest loans. For-profit owners of rental property may be eligible for zero interest loans for renovations such as leaky roofs, electrical and plumbing. The loans can be for up to \$15,000 per unit with payments deferred for ten years. To be eligible, the owner must agree to charge reduced rents to low-

income tenants for a ten year period. For this program, properties must be located in certain areas of the city. (For details, call Lyle Knudson, 619/578-7521, or click on "programs" on our web site, sdhc.net.)

A new "project based" voucher program (in which assistance stays with the rental unit vs. being "attached" to the tenant). This program can be used in conjunction with the above financing and also brings the benefit of providing long-term rent guarantees for multiple tenants. (For more information, please call Rudy Cervantes, 619/578-7538.)



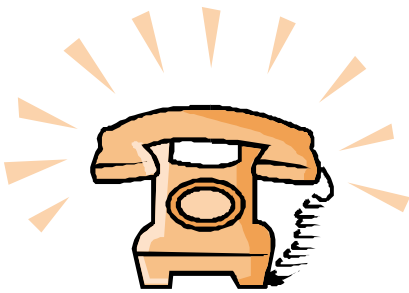
Lead paint safety update

Our inspection process—which includes checking for lead paint in some cases—helps you protect your property and the health and safety of your tenants. If you need help removing lead paint, the Housing Commission offers free testing, plus we offer a zero percent deferred loan program to finance work to remove lead paint. In accordance with federal law, we test for lead paint when one or more of your future tenants is a child under the age of six and if we note a considerable amount of peeling paint. (You may recall that properties built between 1960 and 1978 were exempt; however, a new law just went into effect requiring these properties to comply with lead paint testing/removal regulations.)

We've got your number...do you have ours?

By now you have probably received a list of our updated phone numbers. If you haven't, please call Patti Saunders at 619/578-7613 to request one. It shows all the new phone numbers for staff and the rental assistance department. All staff members changed to new numbers after our phone system was replaced with a modernized one.

The Housing Commission's main number, 619/231-9400, is still the same, and it includes a staff directory should you need it.



San Diego County Apartment Association —a super resource for owners!

Did you know that the San Diego County Apartment Association has a host of services to help you manage your rental properties? If you are a member, or if you sign up to become one, benefits include educational classes, a monthly magazine (*Rental Owner*), housing counseling, and low-cost tenant screenings.

"Proper resident screening is the most important factor in operating a successful rental property," according to Scott Blech, the Apartment Association's executive director. Although the Housing Commission helps with tenant pre-screenings (it checks for drug and violent crimes), it's important to also review credit and eviction, as well as verifying social security numbers and current residency. The association offers a range of resident screening packages starting as low as \$11.50 per applicant. Some of this cost may be passed along to the tenant; state law allows you to charge applicants up to \$30 to cover these expenses. For more information, call 858/278-8070.



The Apartment Association can help with pre-screenings.

VIEWpoint newsletter wins award

VIEWpoint newsletter just won a "Silver Savvy" award from a national government communications organization called 3CMA. A big thanks and congratulations go to all our readers who have been helping us with story ideas,

photos, and interviews! This is actually the fourth award we've won since starting this publication a little over a year ago. So please keep sharing your thoughts and suggestions with us, and we promise to keep listening!



VIEWpoint is published by the Rental Assistance Department as a way to keep rental owners/managers updated on issues and policies regarding housing assistance programs. If you have any ideas for future stories, or if you have any suggestions about our programs, please contact Owner Liaison Lynda Taylor at 619/578-7680; lyndat@sdhc.org.



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