

- - OUR CORNER - -

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF AMERICUS NEWSLETTER

"Building Bridges For Better Communication"

January 2011

HAA CONTINUES SELF-SUFFICIENCY WORKSHOPS



**Keishon Thomas, FVSU Housing Specialist
(Preparing for Home Ownership)**



**Gail Adams, FVSU Home Economics Specialist
(Stretching Your Food Dollars)**



**Gail Dunn, Wells Fargo Bank
(Steps to Credit Building)**

The Resident Services Department of the Americus Housing Authority continues to sponsor a variety of self-sufficiency workshops each month. Whether your interest is in preparing heart healthy meals, learning how to create a workable budget, composing a job-winning resume, or simply meeting the required number of community hours as mandated by HUD – there will be a workshop just for you.

All workshops are advertised through flyers in the mail as well as flyers being posted in our front office area. Speakers from various professions in and around our local community are invited to conduct workshops based upon their specialized area of training. Some workshops are conducted by staff from within the Housing Authority. If you have a particular area of interest, or would like to conduct a workshop, or would like to be put on the mailing list for workshop notification, please contact Diana Roberts in our Resident Services Department at 229-924-3732.

NEWS FROM THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

Hello from the Maintenance Department. I hope you all had a good holiday season and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a happy new year. We are currently in the middle of winter with some very cold days to come. Please take the following precautions:

1. Be sure your smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector is working.
2. To test these devices, just push the test button to be sure an audible alarm sounds.
3. If your detectors “beep” occasionally, it indicates that the **battery is low**. Do not remove the battery, as the detector is still working. Place a call to the service desk during regular hours for a battery replacement.
4. Keep your thermostat set at 68 degrees and wear additional clothing to keep your utility costs at a minimum.
5. Do not use your range burners or oven to heat your residence.
6. If you use portable heaters be sure that they are UL approved. Heaters should always be well away from combustible materials such as papers, bed linens, sofas etc., and have a tip over safety switch (i.e. the heater will turn itself off if accidentally tipped over).
7. Keep all your doors and windows closed securely to keep the heat in and the cold out.
8. If you smell gas, exit the apartment immediately and call the fire department. **DO NOT** call from inside the apartment.

We are having an increasing problem with stray dogs and cats at various complexes in Americus. Some residents are leaving food out for these animals at night which has a tendency to attract more and more animals. Please do not feed any stray animals.

Article submitted by:
Gary Woods, Manager of Maintenance

FIRE SAFETY TIPS **{Fire escape drills at home}**

Practice regularly. At least twice annually, hold an in-home fire drill at various times of the day and night.

Walk through your house together as a family. Know all exits and escape routes. Check to ensure that pathways are clear and windows and doors open easily.

Make your drill as realistic as possible. For example, pretend that flames are blocking some exits so you can consider different ways out.

Remind everybody to carefully feel doors and doorknobs with the back of their hand before opening them. Never open a door that’s warm. Instead, try another escape route.

Tell family members to close doors behind them on their way out. This will help slow the spread of fire.

Tell kids how to avoid smoke when escaping. Teach them to bend over or crawl to get under the smoke, keeping their head two feet or less above the floor, where the air will be the cleanest.

Show kids what a smoke alarm sounds like. Practice what to do when they hear it.

Emphasize this rule: ONCE YOU’RE OUT, STAY OUT! Be sure your kids know to never go back inside a burning home. Not for anything, not even pets or video games.

HAA SENIOR RESIDENTS RECEIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS



Mrs. Sharon Haugabook, Project Manager
Resident: Mr. James Stewart

In the true spirit of the Christmas season, the Americus Housing Authority continued its annual tradition of distributing free Christmas gifts to all of our residents age 55 and older. This year, approximately 154 residents were eligible for Christmas gifts. Each senior resident was presented with a box of Swiss Miss hot chocolate that contained six individual packets. With the unusual amount of cold weather we have been experiencing this winter, the hot chocolate proved to be a very wise gift choice.



Mrs. Virginia Sims, Project Manager
Resident: Ms. Elaine Sims

STROKE.....S.T.R. (Remember the 1st Three Letters)

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S * Ask the individual to **SMILE**.

T * Ask the person to **TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE** coherently.
(i.e. It is sunny out today.)

R * Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.

If he or she has trouble with **ANY ONE** of these tasks, call emergency personnel immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

NEW Sign of a Stroke (STICK OUT YOUR TONGUE)

Note: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: **Ask the person to "stick" out his or her tongue.**

**If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke.

A cardiologist says that if everyone who reads this article shares it with at least 10 people; you can be sure that at least one life will be saved. ***I have done my part. Will you?***

**February 14th
Valentine's
Day!!**



**ROSES ARE RED
VIOLETS ARE BLUE
SUGAR IS SWEET
AND SO ARE YOU!**



Scholarships Available for 2011 High School Graduates & Adult Students

The GAHRA (Georgia Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Inc.) is privileged to announce that this year GAHRA will be awarding \$20,700 to graduating high school seniors. In addition, GAHRA will also be awarding \$8,800 to adult students of GAHRA member authorities.

For high school students, GAHRA will fund seven academic scholarships for programs leading to an undergraduate degree, two technical/vocational scholarships and two academic scholarships. For adult students, GAHRA will fund three academic scholarships and three technical/vocational scholarships.

Completed high school student applications should be submitted by **Thursday, March 10, 2011.**

Completed adult student applications should be submitted no later than **Monday, February 29, 2011.**

Applications can be picked up directly from our front office or received through the mail. All questions and completed applications should be submitted to Diana Roberts in Resident Services. The number for Resident Services is 924-3732. The office is open Monday thru Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. All departments of the Americus Housing Authority are closed each Friday.

TIPS TO HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOLS

Parental support is crucial to a child's success in the classroom. Invest in your children's future by helping them to excel in school.

*Send children to school each day well-rested, fed and with a positive outlook.

*Ask you children about school; take a genuine interest.

*Report any all incidents of bullying to the proper school personnel/authorities immediately.

*Be supportive of children in school, regardless of any bad experiences you may have had.

*As much as possible, get to know your children's teachers. Check with them to monitor your child's progress.

*Set specific time blocks for homework. Check your children's homework for accuracy.

*Establish a specific time for children to go to bed during the school week.

*Make note of deadlines for children's projects on your calendar too.

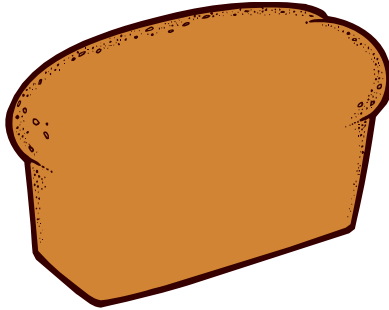
*Talk to your children often about behaving properly on the bus, in the classroom and at all school functions.

*Display grades and children's projects in your home.

*Share with other family members and friends when your children do well in school.

***ALWAYS** be an encourager for your children. Not all children learn at the same rate of speed, but.....**ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN.**

RECIPE CORNER



BANANA NUT BREAD

3 very ripe bananas
½ cup sugar
¼ cup vegetable oil
1 large egg
2 tsp baking powder
2 cups flour
½ tsp vanilla (optional)
1 cup coarsely broken nuts

Steps

Puree bananas in a food processor; add sugar and oil, run a few seconds. Add egg; pulse 4 or 5 times.

In a large bowl, mix flour and baking powder. Pour banana mixture into flour and baking powder. Beat with a mixer until smooth. Add ½ tsp vanilla. Add nuts. Pour into greased and floured loaf pan and bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes.

Test by inserting a thin knife in center. If the knife comes out clean, banana bread is done. Let cool a few minutes before removing from pan, then cool on a wire rack.



COOKING TIPS

*Talk with your child about the names of the foods and tools you are using and their colors, shapes, textures and sizes. *This is a great time to help them learn new words.*

SPICY SHRIMP

½ cup olive oil
2 tbsp. Cajun seasoning
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1 tbsp. honey
1 tbsp. soy sauce
Pinch cayenne pepper
1 lb. shrimp, shelled & deveined
1 pkg. fresh linguini or angel hair pasta (prepared as directed)



Steps

Combine first 7 ingredients in 9x13 inch baking dish. Add shrimp and toss to coat. Refrigerate one hour. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Bake until shrimp are cooked thoroughly, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Serve over pasta. Garnish with lemon wedge and serve with French bread.

COOKING TIPS

*It helps children understand fractions when they can see for themselves that ¼ is smaller than ½. A set of measuring cups or measuring spoons with the fractions written on them can help children practice the math they learn in school. $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$. You can explain that they can fill the ¼ cup twice to get ½ cup.

*Children can cut some foods in a recipe using a plastic knife with your supervision. Plastic knives are still sharp, so teach them to keep their fingers away from the knife blade and to use a cutting board.

*Allow your children to help you set the table for dinner.

COMMON CENTS FOR SHOPPING (Smart Shopping at the Grocery Store)

Out of all the spending categories in your budget, you can exercise the most control over groceries because you make the decision on buying every item. Here are some tips for saving money at the grocery store.

***Never go into the grocery store without a list.** If you do, you are much more likely to buy impulse items and other items you do not need. Shop without a list and you are more likely to forget something, resulting in another trip to the grocery store and more impulse buys. Get to know the store you use the most, and if possible list the items you need in order of where they are in the store.

***Buy fresh fruit and vegetables when they are in season.** For example, instead of buying blueberries in winter months and paying for the shipping and import fees, buy them in the summer when they are more likely to be grown nearby. You will get a fresher product and hang on to more of your money. The food section of your local newspaper usually features articles and recipes on seasonal items.

***Use coupons to save money on items you usually buy anyway.** Likewise, do not buy items just because you have a coupon if you would not normally buy them. Make sure that what is shown to be on sale is really a bargain for you.

***Do not be a brand loyalist.** Consider buying the store brand instead of the national brand. If you compare ingredients, you will often find no difference between brands. Store brands are often as good as or even better in some instances than national brands.

***Use the unit price to compare costs.** The unit price is how much the item costs per ounce, pound or other unit. The largest size of an item is not always the cheapest. You can find the unit price on the shelf sticker.

***Pay attention to how you shop at the grocery store.** This can help you to get more for your food dollar. Saving a few dollars each trip to the store may seem to be more trouble than it is worth. Those few dollars each week can add up to a lot of money in a year or two.



ACTION STEPS TO PROTECT AGAINST THE FLU

*Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissue in the trash.

*Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

*Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread easily this way.

*Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

*If you are sick with flu-like illness, you should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.

*Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

*Seasonal flu vaccine is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to prevent giving the flu to those at high risk.

*Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of serious flue complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years old and older.

*Antiviral drugs can treat the flu. These are prescription meds (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in the body.

JOB SEEKERS' RESOURCE GUIDE

Begin by Setting Goals

- *What kind of job do you want?
- *What are some alternatives?
- *What do you absolutely do not want to do?
- *Should you consider changing careers?
- *How much do you "need" to earn?
- *Do you need more training?
- *Can you afford to wait for the "perfect" job or do you need to take whatever comes along?
- *Should you relocate to where your skills are more in demand?

Online Application Tips

- *Complete the entire profile or application.
- *Carefully read and follow all the directions.
- *Include details, be specific, use comment sections.
- *If possible, include a cover letter.
- *Ensure the e-mail address used is professional. Use your name only in the address (i.e. john.smith@yahoo.com)
- *Use the same e-mail address in all communications.

Resume Dos and Don'ts

Don't: Think a title speaks for itself. Job titles can often be misleading and can change from one company to another.

Do: Provide position titles with descriptions of the work.

Don't: Apply for a job in a field you only briefly mentioned in your resume.

Do: Tailor your resume so that it is appropriate to the position for which you are applying. Connect your educational and career credits according to their importance to the reader.

Don't: Include confusing sentences or be long-winded on your resume. These will virtually assure you of a place at the back of the line.

Do: Organize your thoughts in a clear, concise manner.

Cover Letter Dos and Don'ts

- *Type your letter and resume; do not hand write either one.
- *Always send original cover letters to employers; not a photocopy.
- *Use 8 ½ "by 11" paper.
- *Use same color paper as your resume.
- *Do not use present or past employment business stationery.
- *Always proofread your cover letter.
- *Remember to sign your cover letter.
- *Don't be negative.
- *Don't mention needed salary, fringe benefits, or vacation time.

Reasons People Don't Get Hired

- *Poor personal appearance
- *Overly aggressive
- *Inability to express information clearly
- *Lack of interest and enthusiasm
- *Nervousness, lack of confidence and poise
- *Emphasis on money
- *Lack of tact and courtesy
- *Negative attitude about past employers
- *No eye contact with the interviewer
- *Application is incomplete and/or sloppy
- *No sense of humor
- *Late for interview
- *Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time
- *Gives vague responses to questions
- *No follow up with thank-you note or phone call

Ten Steps to Finding a Job

1. Plan your Time
2. Identify Occupations
3. Identify Employers
4. Prepare Materials
5. Contact Employers
6. Prepare for Interviews
7. Go to Interviews
8. Take Any Required Tests
9. Follow Up Interviews
10. Accept the Job!

“STAY IN SCHOOL”

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!



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