

FSS

JOURNAL

Fall 2015

EXPLORE HOME OWNERSHIP!

SECTION 8

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM ORIENTATION

November 18, 1:30 pm

Wyoming Public Library

3350 Michael Ave. SW, Wyoming

For complete program information:
grhousing.org/homeowner.html

FREE TICKETS TO THE GRAND RAPIDS SYMPHONY!

Recipients of Food Stamps, Medicaid or TANF from the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) are eligible to receive FREE TICKETS to Grand Rapids Symphony concerts! Phone Lois Alexander in Resident Services, 235-2885, to request a "Symphony Scorecard" that offers up to four free tickets for selected performances.

BONUS: A limited number of bus passes are also available!

THE RAPID HAS NEW FARES:

Reduced fair cash: 85¢

Senior/persons with disabilities,
10-ride ticket: \$8.50

GO!Bus one-way trip: \$3.50

GO!Bus non-disabled senior,
one-way trip: \$8.00

For a list of all fare changes, stop by the RSS office at Sheldon Apartments, 1010 Sheldon SE, or log on to:

<https://www.ridetherapid.org/articles/new-fare-structure-october-1-2015>



GRAND RAPIDS HOUSING COMMISSION

Family Self-Sufficiency Program

1010 Sheldon Ave. SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

616.235.2893

"FSS Step Challenge" in Action: FSS Program Client Overcomes Disability to Earn College Degree



***FSS STEP CHALLENGE:** Throughout 2015, for each step toward your goals you complete, your GRHC Resident Services Specialist will enter you into the 2015 FSS Step Challenge Grand Prize drawing. Challenge participants will receive a certificate and a chance to win prizes valued at up to \$500! Ask your Resident Services Specialist for details!*

The GRHC Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program's 2015 "FSS Step Challenge" marches on, and your FSS Program team hopes to inspire you to keep working toward your goals by sharing the inspiring story of FSS participant Ashley Miggins, who recently became the first person in her family to earn a college degree.

Ashley's accomplishment is particularly impressive because she managed to achieve her educational goals despite having a learning disability; she started college reading at an elementary school level, but with incredible persistence and the help of a wonderful mentor, this past May Ashley completed a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Ferris State University. She has also earned two associate degrees and a professional certificate from Grand Rapids Community College.

Ashley grew up on Grand Rapids' southeast side in a neighborhood where crime was frequent and education was not a focus or even a topic of discussion. Ashley's mother worked a factory job to

support her family, and while teen-aged Ashley was not particularly interested in her high school classes, her mother was determined that she graduate, even pulling Ashley from her high school basketball team to encourage more focus on academics.

Ashley's learning disability made reading a problem throughout her schooling. When Ashley decided to pursue a college education, a member of the church where she had attended a youth group proved to be an invaluable help.

Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church member and retired teacher Pat Westveer spent her career helping students with disabilities and has worked with Ashley since 2006 when the church awarded her a scholarship to attend GRCC. While helping her move from an elementary to a college reading level seemed a daunting challenge, Pat saw Ashley's determination to learn and began tutoring her several times a week, teaching both reading and writing skills.

Throughout her college career, Ashley took a few courses per semester and worked part-time driving a school bus, cleaning homes, or working at a day care center to support herself and later her young son. Ashley's progress was steady, and after two years of college, she and Pat noticed amazing improvement in her learning skills; she had gained the ability to read and comprehend her textbooks independently! Nine years later Ashley and Pat are celebrating her accomplishments.

Congratulations, Ashley, and best wishes for ongoing success!

Community Resource Corner

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

HISPANIC CENTER OF WESTERN MICHIGAN BILINGUAL COLLEGE FAIR

Thursday, October 15

6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

César E. Chávex Elementary

1205 Grandville Ave. SW, Grand Rapids

FREE and open to the public

For complete information:

2015BilingualCollegeFair.eventbrite.com

EDUCATION CONNECTION

Goodwill Industries offers educational tours of local colleges where you can connect with academic advisors, explore fields of study, and estimate your financial aid and scholarship awards.

Participating schools include...

Grand Rapids Community College

Muskegon Community College

Grand Valley State University

Davenport University

Goodwill Industries Hartley Career Center

For more information, please call Darius Lewandowski at 890-6877.

GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE (GRCC) LEAN CHAMPION CERTIFICATION

This 19-course GRCC program is designed to prepare students to plan and implement workplace initiatives that increase organizational efficiency and profits. For more information, please call GRCC at 234-3766.

SCHOOL RESOURCES FROM GRAND RAPIDS URBAN LEAGUE

The Urban League offers parents help with resolving conflicts with a child's school related to suspension, disability/IEP support, grading issues, communication with teachers, school registration and other concerns. For more information, please call the Urban League at 245 2207.

JOB SEARCH RESOURCE

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER WORKSHOPS

The Women's Resource Center is offering a series of free orientations and workshops for all FSS Program participants at Hope Community, 1024 Ionia Ave. SW. Topics include resume development, job interviewing skills, job fair expectations, self-esteem, stress management, goal setting, "vision boards" and more.

- Monthly orientation meetings 4th Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m.
- Monthly workshops 2nd Tuesday of each month at 2:00 p.m.
- One-on-one help in specific areas is available on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month by appointment.

For details about these opportunities, contact GRHC staff at 235-2893.

FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING RESOURCE

FIFTH THIRD BANK EMPOWER U SERIES TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 10:00 A.M.

SHELDON APARTMENTS, 1010 SHELDON SE Empower U offers free educational sessions designed to provide participants with information that will help them make the best financial decisions. Topics include:

- Saving Money & Successful Budgeting
- Ways to Boost Your Credit Score

RSVP by October 15 to Felicia Clay: 450-4825; email: fclay@grhousing.org

HEALTH CARE RESOURCE

THE GRAND RAPIDS RED PROJECT

The Red Project's mobile unit will be at Adams Park Apartments each Friday from 3:00-4:30 p.m. offering these health services:

- HIV/Hepatitis C testing, links to care
- Syringe access and disposal
- Safer sex supplies and education
- Overdose prevention & response training

Adams Park Apartments is located at 1440 Fuller Avenue SE. For more information, contact your GRHC Resident Services Coordinator.

FSS Program Grads!



FSS Program grads and their GRHC Resident Services Specialists show off graduation certificates during a special event at Sheldon Apartments

Congratulations to our summer Family Self-Sufficiency Program graduates:

Isho Hassan

Danielle Hinkle

Felicia Jackson

Lavonda Martinez-Thompson

Ashley Mason

Cira Meija

Crystal Robinson

Traci Willis

Our new grads were honored with an early-September celebration in the Sheldon Apartments Community Room. Many thanks to event sponsor Chemical Bank for treating our graduates and their guests to a delicious luncheon buffet!

Email Keeps You In the Loop!

Your FSS Program team hopes to streamline communication by gathering email addresses for all participating families. Never miss the latest news about events and resources—update your Resident Services Specialist with your email address today!

RSS staff email addresses:

Felicia Clay: fclay@grhousing.org

Caroline Gillilan: cgillilan@grhousing.org

Kathy Monroe: kmonroe@grhousing.org

Laura Mosley: lmosley@grhousing.org

Eulondon Reeves: ereeves@grhousing.org

Erin Shibley: eshibley@grhousing.org

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