

“WHAT HOME MEANS TO ME” POSTER CONTEST FOR K-12

The NAHRO Housing America “What Home Means to Me” poster contest invites young GRHC residents in kindergarten through 12th grade to submit original artwork for a chance to win a gift card or an iPad and a trip to Washington, DC.

Contest entry deadline: **March 23, 2017**. For entry forms and complete information: grhousing.org/pdf/poster_contest.pdf

SECTION 8 HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM ORIENTATIONS

All orientations will be held at **Wyoming Public Library**
3350 Michael Ave. SW, Wyoming
Orientation Dates/Times:
3/23/17, 2 p.m. 9/19/17, 2 p.m.
6/22/17, 2 p.m. 12/19/17, 2 p.m.

For complete program information: 616/450-4825 or grhousing.org/homeowner.html

SCHOOL ADVOCATE PROGRAM FROM G. R. URBAN LEAGUE

The Grand Rapids Urban League and Believe 2 Become are offering an “Opportunity Line” parents can call to get help if their child is worried about school, struggling with suspensions or is in need of help with the IEP process. The Opportunity Line can be reached at 252-2201 or 1-800-842-1118.



**GRAND RAPIDS
HOUSING COMMISSION**
Family Self-Sufficiency Program
1420 Fuller Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
616/235-2600

Beat the Winter Blues



Don't let the murky skies of our Michigan winter cast a cloud over your sunny disposition! Use the tips below to keep your mood and energy up during these long winter months.

Exercise

Enjoy the great outdoors by trying a new winter sport, or just take a walk, especially on those days when there is some sunshine. If you can't face the cold temperatures, make a habit of exercising indoors—even light exercise is beneficial. Exercise increases levels of serotonin and endorphins, substances that enhance energy and mood.

Ramp Up Your Social Life

Keep your spirits up by connecting with family and friends. Start a card club or family game night. Broaden your circle by joining a community group or volunteering for an organization that supports a cause that's important to you.

Supplement Vitamin D

You may not get adequate vitamin D during the winter due to lack of sun exposure. Research shows that vitamin D deficiency is linked with poor mood and

can also affect bone health. Safeguard your health by asking your doctor whether you should supplement vitamin D.

Maximize Your Sleep Quality

Research shows that lack of sleep can lead to anxiety, low mood or even depression. These tips from the National Sleep Foundation can help you greet the day with energy and optimism:

- Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Avoid midday naps. Sticking to a sleep schedule regulates your body's clock and can help you fall asleep and stay asleep more easily.
- Maintain a relaxing bedtime routine. Your body needs time to shift into sleep mode, so spend the last hour of your day doing a calming activity such as reading. If you have trouble sleeping, avoid electronics before bed or in the middle of the night.
- Exercise daily, but don't let an exercise activity encroach on regular sleep time.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and heavy meals in the evening—all can disrupt sleep.
- Keep your bedroom cool and dark. Consider blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs or a “white noise” machine.

Congratulations, Fall Family Self-Sufficiency Program Grads!



Fall 2016 Family Self-Sufficiency Program graduates celebrate with GRHC staff during a special event in the Sheldon Apartments Community Room.

Congratulations to our fall Family Self-Sufficiency Program graduates:

Nashayla Baker	Esther Nsaguye	Taneka Tyler
Mohamed Jama	Erica McCoy	Mastassia Johnson
Charmela Johnson	Cotrina Meekie	Alteshia Reed
Malynder Jones	Letetia Merrill	Jennifer Valdez

FREE Income Tax Preparation Help

United Way's Kent County Tax Credit Coalition offers eligible households free assistance with tax preparation and electronic filing. The coalition has more than 200 volunteers at 15 income tax assistance locations throughout our community to offer help with:

- Completing federal income tax returns.
- Applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit, which can mean a credit of up to \$6,269 for a family of three or more.
- Free electronic filing or "e-filing" of federal returns.

You may qualify for these tax services if your household income is \$55,000 or less.

The Coalition wants taxpayers to know that there have been changes to the tax law this year: For those claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or Child Care Credit, returns will not be processed before February 15. For more information and to set up your tax preparation appointment, call 2-1-1 or 1-800-887-1107.

Alpha Women's Center Offers FREE Services

Step Up Mentoring Program: Meet one-on-one with a mentor trained to provide support as well as information and education related to such topics as finances, parenting, relationships and pregnancy.

Single Moms Support Group: Meets weekly and includes a meal, life skill development sessions and child care for children age 6 and under.

Educational Services: Four on-site classes teach life skills and offer group support:

1. GED Completion Program is taught weekly by professional teachers and trained tutors. The center pays for students to take GED exams.
2. ESL class is offered weekly September-May. Taught by trained tutors. Child care available for ages 6 and under.
3. Six-week Parenting Class
4. Four-week Pregnancy Education Class

Alpha Women's Center is located at 1725 Division Ave. South, Grand Rapids. For more information: 616/459-9955.

Employment Resources

Community Job Fair

Kentwood Community Church is offering a monthly job fair that is free to all job seekers. The fair is held the second Wednesday of each month, 9 a.m.-noon, at the Church's Wyoming campus, 2950 Clyde Park SW.

Each month employers are looking to hire workers in such areas as retail, health care, manufacturing, hospitality, transportation, customer service, food service and security. Full-time, part-time and seasonal positions are available. Job seekers are encouraged to bring several copies of their resume and to dress in business attire.

2017 Job Fair Dates:

Feb. 8 | Mar. 8 | Apr. 12 | May 10 | Jun. 14
Jul. 12 | Aug. 9 | Sep. 13 | Oct. 11 | Nov. 8

For more information:

<http://www.kentwoodcommunitychurch.com/gr-job-fair>

West Michigan Online Job Fair

WGRD Radio hosts an Online Job Fair at <http://wgrd.com/west-michigan-online-job-fair/>

Employers currently advertising include LaJoy Group, a staffing and workforce solutions company, Amway Hotel Corporation, Meritage Hospitality Group and Townsquare Media Grand Rapids.

Effex Management Solutions Offers Free Ride to Work

Effex Management Solutions is offering free transportation to work to employees hired for a temp-to-permanent position at Magna Mirrors in Alto, Michigan. Qualifications include a high school diploma or GED, an excellent attendance record and the ability to work overtime. Employees must also pass a background check and a pre-hire drug screening.

Apply at the Grand Rapids Urban League, 745 Eastern Avenue SE in Grand Rapids, or call 616/827-3683.