



WINTER 2024  
Volume 3, Issue 4

# THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



## HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA

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### IMPORTANT DATES

- Christmas Eve & Day—December 24 & 25  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- New Years Eve & Day—Dec. 31 & January 1  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—January 20  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- National Wear Red Day—February 7
- Valentines Day—February 14 
- Presidents Day—February 17  
**(KWA Offices Closed)**
- Ramadan Starts—March 1
- Ash Wednesday—March 5
-  Saint Patrick's Day—March 17



We are excited to share that we've revitalized a community partnership with the new management and ownership of Boondocks Grille & Draffhouse! For Thanksgiving, they generously provided free admission for some of our resident kids to play miniature golf and outdoor games, including cornhole and a giant Connect Four. Additionally, each child received a complimentary Thanksgiving kids' meal.



## National Wear Red Day: A Heartfelt Call to Action

Heart disease and stroke claim the lives of one in three women every year. Despite these alarming statistics, many women remain unaware of their risk. This year, on **February 7**, millions of people across the United States will unite for National Wear Red Day, a symbolic and empowering event dedicated to raising awareness about heart disease. Organized by the American Heart Association (AHA) as part of its Go Red for Women initiative, this day encourages individuals to come together, wear red attire, and shine a spotlight on cardiovascular health.

One of the key messages of National Wear Red Day is the power of small, sustainable lifestyle changes in reducing the risk of heart disease. Some of these changes include:

- ⇒ Incorporate more fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, & whole grains into your diet.
- ⇒ Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week.
- ⇒ Practice relaxation techniques to keep stress levels in check.
- ⇒ Schedule annual visits with your healthcare provider to monitor blood pressure, cholesterol, & heart health.

This February, join the movement, wear red, and take a stand for women's heart health. Together, we can turn awareness into action and create a healthier future for all!

## HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

Henry V. Haskins, Sr. (born 1936—died 2009)

Henry V. Haskins, Sr. served as the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Key West from 1967 to 2002, leaving a lasting mark on the agency and the community it serves. During his remarkable 35-year tenure, Mr. Haskins was instrumental in expanding affordable housing opportunities, advocating for residents, and ensuring the authority's role as a pillar of stability and support for countless Key West families and seniors.

Although he left this life in 2009 due to health reasons, Mr. Haskins' impact on our community remains visible. In recognition of his dedication and contributions, the 5-story Senior Citizens' Plaza on Kennedy Drive bears his name—a testament to his enduring legacy and commitment to housing equity. This honor not only commemorates his work but we hope it also inspires future generations to answer the call to continue creating and maintaining safe and affordable housing for all. Rest in peace, Mr. Haskins.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Residents,

As we near the start of a new year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for being the Executive Director of your Housing Authority. It's a privilege to serve you and work together to make our communities safer, stronger, and more connected.

Each new year brings opportunities for progress, renewal, and reflection. While we celebrate the advancements we've made over the past year, we also recognize the challenges many of you continue to face. Please be assured that our commitment to providing quality housing and supportive services remains as firm as ever.

In the year ahead, we will continue striving to meet your needs, improve our properties, and boost the programs that help empower individuals and families to thrive. We are here to listen, to support, and to work alongside you to make sure everyone has the opportunity to build a brighter future.

On behalf of the entire Key West Housing Authority team and its Board of Commissioners, I wish you and your loved ones a year filled with health, happiness, and prosperity. Thank you for being an essential part of our organization. Together, we can make 2025 an extraordinary year for all!

In service,  
*Randy Sterling*



**“The more difficult the victory,  
the greater the happiness in winning.”**

- Pelé (Brazilian soccer player widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time!)



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

*Misty Jung*

**Housing Supervisor at Henry V. Haskins  
Senior Citizens Plaza**

*Interview by Peter Batty*

What position do you currently hold at the Housing Authority?  
I am the Housing Supervisor at the Senior Citizens Plaza.

How long have you worked for the Housing Authority? A little over four years. I previously worked at the Peninsula Housing Authority in Washington State.

What department did you start with, and what was your position? I started as the Housing Manager for the Lang Milian Apartments and Fort Village.

What do you like about your job? Gosh, I like so much about it! I enjoy putting a smile on people's faces. The staff here at SCP is a wonderful team: Ruby, JJ, Tommy, Dayrel, Ray, Tina, Woody, Faustaine, and Cecile.

Where are you from originally? I am from North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Tell us about your family. I am married to Carey who is retired from the Coast Guard and is currently the Marine Operations Coordinator for NOAA here in Key West. We have two adult daughters, Marisa who is working on a PhD in Plant Science at the University of Connecticut and Mariah who works at Keys Energy.

What are your hobbies? I enjoy going to the gym and my family and I spend a lot of time boating on our Boston Whaler.

What are your favorite restaurants? Both of our favorite restaurants are on Cudjoe; they are Broil and Square Grouper.

Do you have pets? We have Opie, who is an English Cream Dachshund, and two granddogs.

If you could change anything about Key West, what would it be? We love the Keys, the simplicity of life, the weather, the people, the laid-back lifestyle, the beauty, but sometimes the traffic can get a little overwhelming.



**Do you want to join our awesome team?**

Check out the job opportunities on page 3 of this newsletter or on our website at [www.kwha.org](http://www.kwha.org)!



# Exciting News: Enhanced Communication for KWA Residents!



**Dear Residents,**

We are thrilled to introduce a new communication tool designed to improve how we keep you informed! Our property management team is now using an automated system called "CallMax" to quickly and efficiently deliver important updates and announcements to you.

## **What Does This Mean for You?**

This tool allows us to send notifications to large groups of residents via text, email, or prerecorded voice messages. Whether it's an update on scheduled maintenance, water shutoffs, changes to pest control, or office closures, you will receive timely, accurate information directly from us.

## **Benefits of the New System:**

- **Faster Notifications:** No more waiting for paper notices or word-of-mouth updates. Get real-time alerts on important information.
- **Multiple Channels:** Receive messages via text or email for maximum convenience.
- **Increased Reliability:** With automated communication, you can trust that you'll stay informed, even during unexpected situations.

## **What Do You Need to Do?**

To ensure you receive these updates, please confirm that we have your current contact information on file. You can easily update your details by completing the form below and dropping it off at your community office or our main location at 1400 Kennedy Drive, Key West, FL 33040.

## **Keeping You Connected**

Our goal is to provide you with the best service and keep you connected to everything that matters in your community. This tool will help us stay in touch and ensure you're always informed.

Thank you for being part of our community. We look forward to serving you better with this exciting new system!

**Current Contact  
Information for  
the New  
CallMax System**

Resident Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_



# Last-Minute Holiday Shopping Tips: How to Get It All Done with Less Stress

The holiday season is upon us, and if you still haven't crossed everything off your shopping list, you're not alone! With busy schedules and the whirlwind of the season, it's easy for shopping to get pushed to the last minute. Don't panic—here are some smart tips to help you finish your holiday shopping without the stress.

## Prioritize with a List

Before you dive into any store (online or in person), write down exactly what you need. This list should include the people you're shopping for, gift ideas, and a budget. Prioritizing your most important purchases can help you avoid impulse buys and keep you focused.

## Consider Digital Gifts

Digital gifts are an excellent solution when you're truly pressed for time. E-gift cards, subscriptions, or downloadable products like audiobooks, streaming services, or apps make thoughtful and instant gifts. They're perfect for long-distance friends and family or anyone who appreciates experiences over material items.



## Get Creative with Gift Cards



Gift cards are not just last-minute saviors—they can be personal and thoughtful if presented well. Try pairing a gift card with a small, related item. For example, a coffee shop gift card with a cute mug or a bookshop gift card with a handwritten note about your favorite reads can add a personal touch.

## Use Local Shops and Small Businesses

Don't forget about local boutiques, markets, or small businesses. Often, you can find unique, handcrafted gifts without the shipping delays of online giants. Plus, you'll be supporting your community!

## DIY and Homemade Gifts

If time is really tight, consider making a DIY gift. It could be as simple as baking a batch of cookies, creating a personalized photo album, or making your own gift baskets with small, thoughtful items. These types of gifts often have the most heart and can feel extra special because of the effort you put in.

## Embrace the Power of Wrapping

Even if your gift is last-minute, presentation matters. A nicely wrapped gift can make a simple item feel more polished and thoughtful. Stock up on gift bags, tissue paper, and festive ribbons, which can quickly elevate any present.

## Stay Calm and Enjoy the Season



Lastly, remember that holiday shopping doesn't have to be stressful. Keep perspective and try to enjoy the process. At the end of the day, the holidays are about spending time with loved ones, and the best gifts come from the heart.

With these tips, you can finish your holiday shopping with ease and maybe even have time left over to relax and enjoy a holiday movie!

## **GOOD TO KNOW!**

The Monroe County Public Library at 700 Fleming Street in Key West offers Computer Classes every Tuesday & Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.! Topics include Basic Microsoft Word & Resume Formatting. Stop by their front desk or call 305-292-3595 to sign up for an upcoming class.



## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE KEY WEST HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida is dedicated to providing excellent customer service and assistance to its tenants, applicants, & landlords by employing and retaining a highly qualified and well-trained staff that supports its mission.

### Current Employment Openings (as of 12/23/2024):

- Maintenance Mechanic (F/T)
- Resident Care Supervisor (F/T)

### **How To Apply:**

To apply for a position with the Key West Housing Authority, please submit a completed Application for Employment, a completed Criminal & Traffic Background Authorization Form, & a signed job description for the position you are applying for.

### **Via Email:**

Mary Martinez  
Human Resources & Risk  
Management Manager  
[MartinezM@kwha.org](mailto:MartinezM@kwha.org)

### **Via Postal or Hand Delivery:**

The Housing Authority of the  
City of Key West, Florida  
Attn: Human Resources  
1400 Kennedy Drive  
Key West, FL 33040

## PEST CONTROL SCHEDULE



**Fort Village**—  
3rd Wednesday of each month

**Garden View Apartments**—  
1st Wednesday of each month

**George Allen Apartments**—  
2nd Wednesday of each month

**Jack T. Murray Senior Complex**—  
2nd Wednesday of each month

**Lang Milian Apartments**—  
2nd Wednesday of each month

**Poinciana Gardens**—  
2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month

**Robert Gabriel Apartments**—  
3rd Wednesday of each month

**Roosevelt C. Sands, Jr. Affordable Housing Complex**—  
3rd Wednesday of each month

**Senior Citizen Plaza**—  
4th Wednesday of each month

Please promptly report any pest control issues, including bed bugs, to the Maintenance Department or your property manager.

## LOOKING BACK

Fall was no time to fall behind! Below are just a few of the exciting things that happened the past few months:

- ◆ Hosted a Monster Bash Halloween party for the residents of Senior Citizen Plaza.
- ◆ Staff served a Thanksgiving Dinner sponsored by Fausto's Food Palace to the residents at Senior Citizen Plaza. In December, staff served a Christmas Dinner and Santa Clause took photos with the residents.
- ◆ Installed a new whole-building generator at Senior Citizen Plaza.
- ◆ Began replacing the shingle roofs with metal roofs for 33 multi-family buildings at Poinciana Plaza. Work is progressing quickly.
- ◆ Continued working with an architect on design of up to 54 new residential units at Poinciana Plaza.
- ◆ Welcomed a new member to the KWAHA Board of Commissioners, Mr. John Topino.
- ◆ Welcomed a new City Commission liaison, Commissioner Donny Lee.
- ◆ Presented the FY2025 Budget to the Board of Commissioners.

## RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

WITH MR. GARY

"When I say practice...you say, practice, practice, practice...Practice Builds Confidence."

YoungG da Rappa Reada

Merry Christmas everyone! Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la, la la la la. In celebration of the Christmas spirit, I want to acknowledge all our wonderful residents, I have observed, who have been kind and generous to neighbors during this holiday season!

Merry Christmas 🌲 Happy Hanukkah 🕯️ Happy Kwanza 🪿 Happy New Year

The New Year brings NEW opportunities to read more, learn new things, and celebrate personal resolutions to make our lives better in 2025.

2025



### ATTENTION Housing Authority Kids from 6 to 13 years old!

You are invited to participate in poetry workshops in January through March 2025. Key West Poet Laureate Emily Schulten will teach you about the "magic of words" to begin writing poems. The Seawall Society of Young Poets is the creation of Key West Poet Laureate Emily Schulten. Call Mr. Gary for details 305-304-5568.



### ATTENTION Housing Authority Senior Citizens!

If you reside at SCP, Poinciana Gardens, or Jack T. Murray Senior Complex, you are invited to participate in attending as many as six Impromptu Classical Concerts for FREE in January through March 2025. For more info, check out their website at [keywestimpromptu.org](http://keywestimpromptu.org), or call Mr. Gary at 305-304-5568. To sign up, call Mr. Gary so he can put your name on the "Will Call" list. Monroe County staff will provide free transportation.

### ATTENTION Housing Authority High School Seniors!

Graduating students interested in a career in nursing may be eligible to apply for the Knight Foundation's 2025 Nursing Scholarship. Call Mr. Gary at 305-304-5568 for more info.



A HUGE thank you to Chris Elwell from Royal Furniture & Design for his generous donation of a brand new living room set for the Jack T. Murray community room. This thoughtful contribution has made a significant difference in creating a warm, welcoming, and comfortable space for our senior residents to gather! 🥰

Visit the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Animal Farm free of charge the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 1 – 3 pm at the Sheriff's Office Headquarters on College Rd. For more info, call (305) 293-7300.

**Gary Young**  
**Contact Info**  
[youngg@kwaha.org](mailto:youngg@kwaha.org)  
or  
**(305) 304-5568**



Attention Residents of Senior Citizen Plaza & Jack T. Murray Senior Complex: Our community partner, Monroe County Social Services, provides transportation to the Publix and Winn Dixie shopping centers. Please speak to your Housing Manager for details, and sign up by calling Mr. Gary! (305) 304-5568

Your Housing Authority offers a FREE after school program for families who reside at Lang Milian, George Allen, Robert Gabriel & Fort Village. Elementary and Middle School students have fun during play activities and receive assistance with homework, reading, & math. Check out our new Computer Lab!

Call Mr. Gary TODAY! at (305) 304-5568 and schedule an Open House visit to our classroom at Building 13-G, Lang Milian Apartments, 301 White Street near the new playground!

