

April is National Fair Housing Month

The City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division is celebrating the 52nd anniversary of the Federal Fair Housing Act with a virtual community outreach video that can be seen on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/fUc5yPAOZUg>.

When the law was first passed in 1968, the Fair Housing Act only covered four protective classes: race, color, religion, and national origin. Sex was added as a protective class in 1974, and disability and family status were added in 1988.

Please view the video and be on the lookout for interesting facts all month long!

For more information about the national Fair Housing Act, visit hud.gov.

A New Dawn for Emma

When Emma found Dawning Family Services, she found more than sustainable housing for her family. She found hope.

Evicted from the Tampa area home she shared with her mother and three children; Emma needed to provide a safe, stable environment for her family while they were already in the middle of a medical crisis. Her infant son was in the hospital receiving intensive care.

Emma said she has “been happy since day one” as a client of Dawning Family Services.

Dawning Family Services is a non-profit organization that has been serving the homeless in the Tampa area since 1981. First focused on providing housing for women and their children, services were expanded in 2018 to include all disenfranchised families. Residential (emergency shelter) and non-residential (drop-in) services are offered.

“For me, this is all about social justice,” Patricia (Pat) Langford, CEO of Dawning Family Services, said recently. “Our families deserve a shot at success. Moving into our shelter from living in a car or sleeping on a park bench and then quickly moving into permanent housing offers opportunities that so many of us take for granted.”

In 2019, Dawning Family Services (formerly Alpha House of Tampa) was able to provide:

- Emergency shelter onsite to 108 adults and 182 children
- Post-shelter support services to 92 families
- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) services including security and utility deposits, rental assistance and post-shelter case management services to 47 families

In Emma’s situation, she was able to work one-on-one with a case manager who took the time to understand the family’s unique needs. Childcare vouchers, a safe and affordable apartment, coordinated financial assistance to help with security and utility deposits were all accessed to ensure Emma’s success in the family’s new home.

Dawning Family Services incorporates programs and case management to create a personalized plan for each family. Services include:

- Safe and secure shelter
- Housing search programs
- Prevention & diversion services
- Rapid Re-Housing assistance
- Post-shelter support to ensure a family’s continued housing stability

Now that her son is home, Emma’s mother Michelle handles childcare while Emma works to provide for the family. Dawning Family Services “helped me to keep my entire family together so I could meet my family’s needs,” Emma said.

For more information about Dawning Family Services, visit their office at 6718 N. Armenia Avenue; call 813-875-2024; or go online to www.dawningfamilyservices.org.



Housing and Community Development

From the Manager

On COVID-19

The COVID-19 Pandemic is a viral spread that has not occurred in over 100 years. We are all experiencing and adjusting to a new way of life. As nature takes this time to adjust the earth (clean air, water and revive the animals), so too should we take this time to clean house and cleanse our minds. We are being given a pause to appreciate our health and the people around us. This is a time to reconnect with family on social media and the phone. To take stock in yourself and family and work on those things you kept putting off. People are learning to “Social Distance,” improving computer skills, singing handwashing songs and renewing conversations with friends they didn’t have time to stay in touch with.

This is a time when we all must adjust and care for one another. At HCD, we are adjusting how we work and serve the community. We are working on finding new ways to spread the word and offer services. We are learning more about computers and software than we had over the last ten years. I am even learning more about social media than I wanted to, all in an effort to stay in touch with the community. Because the Unity in our name (Housing and COMMUNITY Development) has even more meaning during times like these. While you have the time visit our webpage and watch the transformation as we add videos and News You Can Use. As this crisis evolves you will see the City of Tampa evolve too. This is an unprecedented event in our history and I look forward to the day I can get a tee shirt that says “I survived Covid-19.” Stay safe everyone.

Your humble servant,
Vanessa B. McCleary
HCD Manager



All Hands on Deck



Although our office is temporarily closed to walk-in clients, staff from the City of Tampa’s Housing and Community Development division are finding ways to continue helping people while the Safer at Home Order is in effect statewide.

City of Tampa HCD employees are joining staffers from other city divisions to answer calls and questions from concerned citizens at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in downtown Tampa.

The EOC hotline for updated information related to COVID-19 is 1-833-TPA-INFO, but answers to many of the most frequently asked questions are also online at www.tampagov.net/COVID-19.

Visitors to the website can find basic facts and information about the virus, links to social services offering financial assistance and food resources, and details about programs to help small businesses.



Virtual Easter Egg Hunt

Join the City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division on a Virtual Easter Egg Hunt. See if you can spot the Easter Bunny while on the lookout for 29 Easter eggs hidden throughout our website at www.tampagov.net/hcd.

Participants can enter a drawing to win a Gift Card. To enter, send an email to Ebone.Clifton@tampagov.net with a list of the Easter eggs and the web pages where you found them. The contest ends on April 30, 2020.

We hope you have a happy Easter holiday with your families as you learn all about the resources and programs that the Housing and Community Development division has to offer.



Helping from Home

Like so many other Tampa citizens who are doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19, most of the employees at the City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division are working from home.

Although our office at 4900 W. Lemon Street is temporarily closed to walk-in clients, we are still available to help. Staff members are staying in touch through virtual meetings and by telephone so we can continue responding to the day-to-day questions and concerns of our valued clients.

To contact the City of Tampa Housing and Community Development Division, call 813-274-7940 or visit us online at www.tampagov.net/hcd.

Some facts about COVID-19

The City of Tampa and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have put together useful fact sheets in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) with details about COVID-19. Some of the most common questions and answers about this respiratory illness include:

What can I do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water, and wash them frequently
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

What should I do if I'm sick?

- Stay home if you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you touch frequently

Visit www.tampagov.net/COVID-19 for more information.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

**TAMPA'S RECOVERY HOTLINE
FOR SOCIAL RECOVERY & BUSINESS RELIEF**

Available Monday - Friday, 8am-8pm

1-833-TPA-INFO (872-4636)

Text TAMPAREADY to 888-777 for updates

Envia TAMPALISTA al 888-777 para español

For more information, visit: tampagov.net/COVID-19

Home for 100

COVID-19 and the ongoing Shelter at Home Order are presenting new challenges to people throughout Tampa, but especially for the city's homeless.

The City of Tampa and the Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg teamed up to provide one solution – the temporary shelter of 100 tents along with mobile shower trailers, a mobile laundromat, portable toilets and hand washing stations. Residents will also receive three meals a day at the site called Hillsborough Hope.

This combination of services is designed to reduce the risk of the virus spreading among the city's vulnerable homeless population by improving their health, making it easier to stay clean and providing sleeping quarters that maintain the appropriate social distance.

"The sooner we start taking care of each other, the sooner we can get through this together," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said in a recent text.



Introducing ...

Derrick Lewinson, our newest Housing Counselor at HCD. Derrick has a background in banking and is highly motivated to help people meet their homeownership goals.

