

NOV 2017



Housing Partnership
Serving St. Johns County Since 1978

NOV 2017

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. JOHNS HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

COMMITTED TO SAFE, DECENT, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SJHP is Weatherizing in Clay County

The St. Johns Housing Partnership is excited to expand its weatherization services into neighboring Clay County to the northwest. Their weatherization program has been working for several years under the umbrella of The Housing Partnership of Northeast Florida, which recently declined to continue those services in Clay County.

Earlier this month, SJHP was approved to operate the Clay County program. SJHP has had tremendous success in its own weatherization services throughout St. Johns County.

Clay County is quite spread out, covering more than 640 square miles from the rural areas of Middleburg and Clay Hill through the lake town of Keystone Heights to the county seat of Green Cove Springs and back into densely populated Orange Park.

The four employees of the existing program—Walter Dunn, inspector; Gina Birmingham, WAP Coordinator; Diane Lewis, administrator; Anthony Platts, inspector—have been weatherizing 25 homes each month. They will spend more than \$800,000 over the next six months extending their efforts.

The SJHP is proud to welcome them to our weatherization team. We look forward to working with the new staff and hope eventually to expand with additional volunteer projects to compliment the weatherization work.

Welcome aboard Clay County!



Weatherization Works in Florida



Weatherization Assistance Available at Hastings' Pie in the Sky

Take a small rural farming town at the far end of the county, a pie shop, a weatherization program, and a commitment to a historically underserved community, mix them together and what do you get?

Pie in the Sky and St. Johns Housing Partnership joining hands to bring needed services to Hastings, the Potato Capital of Florida.

Malea Guiriba, director of Pie in the Sky, has been operating the pie shop for over a year. The concept behind the pie idea was simple: selling pies could fund services for the people of Hastings—and it worked! Guiriba spent five years in Hastings building credibility as a social worker. When funding for the program ran out, she started her own.

The primary focus of her program is to bring organizations and agencies together to help elderly, disabled, or disadvantaged folks in the community after all other resources have been exhausted. Since July 2009, the pie shop has helped build wheelchair ramps, repair homes, buy dentures, and pay for bus tickets home among many other needs met.

Bill Lazar, executive director of SJHP, said that adding the weatherization program to Guiriba's list of available services was a natural fit.

"She has the trust of the community and that goes a long way when you're asking people about their income and other private matters."

The pie shop serves as a focal point for locals of whom many may not have transportation or the price of the 40-mile roundtrip to SJHP in St. Augustine. Since May, the pie shop has taken in 45 applications to SJHP for weatherization. Eight homes have already received weatherization and the others are in varying stages.

"I get referrals from the food bank, health and human services, the library, the café, The Dollar Store, and others," Guiriba said. *"It's a very nontraditional word-of-mouth system that serves this area quite well."*

It's a win-win situation for the pie shop and the community. Part of the mission of Pie in the Sky is to improve energy efficiency and reduce monthly costs for elderly homeowners so they can afford to stay in their homes. The weatherization program accomplishes that mission and creates sustainability for homeowners.

...and then, there is always pie.

Pie in the Sky is located at 224 North Main Street in Hastings. Store hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Malea Guiriba of Pie in the Sky



Pie in the Sky store in Hastings