



## Home for The Holidays

Written by Graciela Hernandez, Housing Counselor

Stacey Kovach waited four years to achieve homeownership. In that time the mother of two had many challenges over the past several years and was able to overcome all of the barriers to homeownership set forth in her homeownership work plan established by HOC Housing Counselors.

The Kovach family began working with HOC in August of 2004. Graciela Hernandez, the family's housing counselor, as well as the counseling team at HOC, knew that homeownership was achievable with the family's hard work. She knew that her goal was to become a homeowner no matter what hurdles she would have to jump. Her goal was set and she kept her "eye on the prize" at all times. Through the process Stacey encountered many challenges, one of the biggest, being a single mother of two young boys on a very limited income. She never gave up and all of those challenges were well worth it.

With the help of Housing Our Communities, City of Chandler, Mesa CAN, Northern Trust Bank, and multiple contractors donating time and materials, Stacey moved into her first home on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 and with a very generous donation from Arizona Cardinal, Kurt Warner's foundation, First things First, she moved into a home full of new furniture, appliances, and completely remodeled! Without the various layers of assistance, the dream of homeownership would not have been possible for Stacey. Kurt Warner's "Home for the Holidays" program provided the Kovach family with the new amenities for their 3



Stacy Kovach, her two sons, and housing counselor, Graciela Hernandez

bedroom home in Chandler. The First Things First, "Homes for the Holidays" program rewards single parents who have worked hard to achieve homeownership, sometimes even helping to build their houses from the ground up. It provides furniture and amenities as a surprise for these first time homebuyers.

First Things First was established in Spring 2001 as a 501 (c) 3 public charity "dedicated to impacting lives by promoting Christian values, sharing experiences, and providing opportunities to encourage everyone that all things are possible when people seek to put 'first things first'" This year another HOC homeowner will be the recipient of the "Home for the Holidays" program award. For more information visit

<http://www.kurtwarner.org>



# Neighborhood Stabilization & Sustainable Communities

By: Stacy Neal, Vice President

As HOC celebrates its 21st anniversary, we welcome the opportunities presented by the national housing market and fiscal climate, of which Arizona ranks at the forefront. The unique combination of low interest rates, excess housing inventory, low housing prices, the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA), and Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) provides HOC a tremendous window of opportunity to significantly impact sustainable homeownership and communities as well as mitigating the impact of the foreclosure crisis throughout Maricopa County.

HOC is recognized as an integral partner in relieving the current housing crisis, promoting sustainable homeownership and stabilizing communities. In May 2009, the City of Avondale awarded HOC an eighteen-month HERA NSP contract for \$1.7 million, enabling 40 to 60 households to occupy rehabilitated foreclosed properties.

Although the NSP contract just began, HOC has received resounding interest and enthusiasm, fielding over 1,000 phone inquiries. In addition to The City of Avondale, HOC also received an NSP contract through The City of Mesa for \$2.8 million for the purchase and rehabilitation of 15 units in the target area of 85204, as well as provide education, counseling, and down payment assistance to those households. HOC is working with REO property holders to secure properties for these homebuyers in addition to working with the lending and real estate community to facilitate the program efficiently.

In November 2009, HOC was recognized in a national publication, Community Developments, The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Department of Treasury. The article notes Housing Our Communities as a "leader in the effort to use REO properties to provide affordable housing" and a "role model for nonprofit organizations across the nation". To view this article, please visit their website at

[http://www.occ.gov/cdd/CD\\_News\\_fall\\_2009.pdf](http://www.occ.gov/cdd/CD_News_fall_2009.pdf)



# Watching Your Budget for the Holidays

Keeping track of your budget during the holidays can be difficult, but there are definitely a few essential things you can do to ensure that you'll still be in control when January rolls around.

Most importantly, set a budget and stick to it. It's essential that you are responsible and realistic when you set your holiday budget. If you can't afford to spend lots of money on gifts, then think of other things that the recipients would enjoy, such as free babysitting, home cooked meals, scrapbooks, etc. It really is the thought that counts!

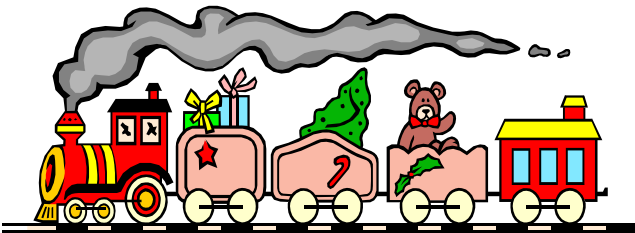
When purchasing gifts know the prices of what you are buying. If things go on sale, make sure that you get the sales price and keep the receipts in case the item needs to be returned or exchanged.

## Cuidando Su Bolsillo durante los días festivos

Mantener tus gastos durante las fiestas puede ser difícil, pero definitivamente hay pocas cosas esenciales que tu puedes hacer para asegurar que tu todavía puedes estar en control cuando Enero se aproxime.

Lo mas importante, planear un presupuesto y mantenerlo, es esencial que tu seas responsable y realístico cuando tu planeas tus gastos para las fiestas. Si no esta a tu alcance gastar mucho dinero en regalos, entonces piensa en otro tipo de regalos, ayudar con el cuidado de los niños, prepararles una cena en casa, un álbum con fotografías, etc. En realidad el detalle es lo que cuenta.

Cuando compres regalos, este al pendiente de ofertas, no olvides guardar sus recibos. Fijarse bien en los precios de lo que esta comprando, y si las cosas se ponen en oferta, asegúrese que le den el precio de oferta. Guardar los recibos para que usted pueda regresar o cambiar el producto.

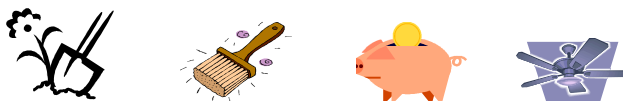


## Welcome LISC Americorps to HOC

Two new LISC Americorps members, Crystal Jaramillo and Maria Jaramillo, are hard at work with HOC, helping staff with housing counseling and outreach. At a two-day orientation in October, LISC Americorps Program Director Stacey Rapp shared the mission, structure, and history of Americorps and introduced the two to the world of community development and LISC.



"Americorps members are invaluable assets to neighborhood nonprofits and the communities where they operate," said Michael Rubinger, LISC president and CEO. "They also represent the future of community development. For more than 15 years, this has been a remarkable program for us."



## Post Purchase Classes

Effective August 1, 2007, our new homeowners will be required to complete their 6 post-purchase classes within the first six months of moving into their home. We will send you our postcard every couple months with upcoming classes at HOC. You can also attend classes at your local Lowe's and Home Depot. In order to receive credit, don't forget to provide us a copy of any classes you take other than HOC's. Please call the following locations for any upcoming classes:

- △ **HOC 480.649.1335**
- △ **Home Depot 480.644.9111**
- △ **Lowe's 480. 832.1666**

