



THE COMMUNITY

Quarterly Newsletter of The Housing Authority of McDonough County



HAMC Halloween Events

Creating New Habits in the New Year

As the New Year arrives, many of us feel inspired to set fresh goals—eat healthier, stay organized, save money, or simply build better habits. But making resolutions is the easy part; sticking with them is where the real work begins. The good news? Small steps add up. Start by choosing one or two goals that truly matter to you. When resolutions are realistic and meaningful, they're much easier to keep. Break each goal into simple actions, like cleaning for ten minutes a day or taking a short walk each morning. Small routines are far more effective than big changes all at once. It also helps to track your progress. A notebook, phone reminder, or calendar can keep you motivated and show how far you've come. And remember—missing a day doesn't mean you've failed. Just pick up where you left off.

Most importantly, celebrate your wins. Every small success builds confidence and turns new habits into long-term routines. Here's to a fresh start, steady progress, and a great year ahead!

Important Dates:

Dates in black = Office Closed

December 25th- Christmas

December 26th- Office Closed

December 31st- NYE (Close @ 2PM)

January 1st- New Years Day

January 19th- Dr. MLK Day

February 2nd- Groundhog Day

February 14th- Valentines Day

February 16th- Presidents Day

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A Message from the Executive Director.

Hello everyone! I hope you are well. We had another busy season at the Housing Authority! We participated in Back-to-School events. We hosted a fun Fall Festival at Greenbriar Apartments, and an amazing Trunk or Treat at Prairieview Townhomes. Many thanks to the organizations and families who helped! A special thank you to the First Christian Church for providing the inflatable slide and to the Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ for preparing enough meals to feed 125 people! If you haven't made it to one of our events yet, be sure to join us in December for a visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at Prairieview Townhomes and Greenbriar Apartments – the dates are on the back of the newsletter.

This is an exciting time in Bushnell as we gear up for new siding at Fitch Manor!! By the time this newsletter is published, it should be done and I'm so excited to see it. Next in the capital plan is siding replacement at Greenbriar Apartments. That project should begin in late spring/early summer 2026. That project will include cleaning and painting the back patio surrounds.

REGARDING MAINTENANCE EMERGENCY CALLS. The Housing Authority provides On-Call maintenance services for emergencies after 4pm, during the weekends and on the holidays. Maintenance will come at any time for NO HEAT, NO HOT WATER, BREACH OF SECURITY, BEEPING SMOKE ALARM, AND LEAKING WATER, like a toilet overflow or a broken valve. Maintenance should be called when an elevator is out at Eisenhower Tower. Maintenance will not come out for a non-emergency when the office is closed. The work order will be taken care of during regular business hours. A call out for a non-emergency can cost you money for a needless call.

Speaking of smoke alarms.. please don't remove the batteries! You are putting your family and neighbors in danger by disarming your smoke detectors! This is a huge problem at Prairieview Townhomes, specifically. The Housing Authority is required to address non-working or beeping smoke alarms within 24 hours. It's dangerous and it's a lease violation to remove the batteries from the smoke alarms.

Okay; we need to talk about the F word. **FRAUD.** Resident rent is subsidized through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), so it is very highly regulated. The Housing Authority must follow a lot of rules and therefore, we must apply those rules through dwelling lease enforcement. Please read **ARTICLES** of the **DWELLING LEASE** on pages 3 and 4 of your lease.

It is **FRAUD** if you do not report new or increased income in your household. Income is from a job, Social Security (including the children) and Veterans benefits, child support, TANF, and odd jobs like babysitting, doing hair, cleaning houses, "working for a guy", DoorDash, Uber Eats, Uber, Lyft, etc. Income even includes regular contributions from family so if grandma is gifting you \$50.00/month – that's income and must be reported. There are some forms of income that are not included, ie income from having a foster child in your home. Better safe than sorry and report the income. Management will let you know if it's counted or not. If it is found that you have income that has not been reported, you will receive a termination notice for fraud and you will be required to pay back the rent that should have been charged if it had been reported on time.

FRAUD is also allowing someone to live with you who is not on your lease. Residents are not allowed to provide overnight accommodation for people more than 14 days per year. Residents may not provide overnight accommodation for people who are homeless or who have been evicted from public housing. Please read **SECTION 5 Tenant Obligations** on pages 7 and 8 of your lease. Don't let your kind heart get you into trouble by allowing people to live with you. **EVERYONE** must go through the application process to be approved for residency.

How many ways may I wish you **HAPPY HOLIDAYS?! Happy Kwanzaa! Happy Hanukkah! And my favorite ~ MERRY CHRISTMAS** and a Happy, Healthy 2026 from the HAMC family to yours.

Best,
Annette

Tenant Incident Reports

We care about keeping our community a safe and peaceful place for everyone. When issues or disagreements arise between tenants, please remember to fill out a Tenant Incident Report instead of stopping by the office to talk about it. While we truly want to help resolve problems, our team stays very busy and may not have time to hear every situation in person. Incident reports ensure your concerns are documented, handled properly, and addressed in a timely manner. Your cooperation helps us keep the community running smoothly for everyone—thank you for helping us help you!

Christmas Pets

The holidays often inspire us to give big, memorable gifts—but before choosing a pet with a bow on its collar, remember that animals are not temporary presents. Pets are long-term commitments that require daily care, training, attention, and ongoing expenses like food, vet visits, and supplies.

If you're considering adding a furry friend this season, please make sure your home, schedule, and budget can support a pet year-round. Many animals gifted during the holidays end up surrendered because families weren't prepared for the responsibility.

For residents who do decide to bring a pet home, remember that all pets must be approved by management before entering the unit, and our pet policies must be followed. This includes registering the pet, meeting size and breed limits, providing vaccination records, paying the pet deposit, and ensuring the animal is properly cared for and not disturbing neighbors.

A pet can be a wonderful companion when the decision is thoughtful and responsible. If you're unsure, consider holiday gifts that don't require ongoing care. Thoughtful planning helps keep both residents and pets safe and supported all year long.



Winter and Mental Health

As the days get shorter and the weather turns colder, it's easy to feel the winter blues creeping in. Between busy schedules, darker evenings, and chilly mornings, many people find their mood or energy slipping this time of year. That's why self-care and mental health are more important than ever during the winter season.

Self-care isn't just about bubble baths or spa days—it's about taking small, intentional steps to care for your mind, body, and emotions. Winter can make this harder because our routines change. We spend more time indoors, get less sunlight, and may feel isolated. But prioritizing mental health now can help prevent burnout, sadness, and stress later.

One of the best things you can do is create structure. Try to keep a steady sleep schedule and plan activities that give you purpose each day. Even a quick walk outside, a call with a friend, or cooking a favorite meal can help lift your mood. Movement is key—exercise releases feel-good chemicals that boost energy and reduce stress.

Light also plays a big role. Open your curtains during the day or spend a few minutes outside when the sun is out. If you struggle with seasonal mood changes, talk to a professional about light therapy or other treatments.

Don't underestimate the power of connection. Reach out to friends, family, or neighbors, even if it's just to chat. Sharing how you feel helps remind you that you're not alone.

Finally, give yourself grace. Some days will feel harder than others, and that's okay. Self-care means listening to what your mind and body need—rest, movement, quiet, or company. By tending to your mental health this winter, you're building resilience and warmth that will carry you through the season and beyond.





Winter 2025-2026

Snow Removal

When we receive 2+ inches of snow, maintenance will plow and clear main sidewalks, ADA units, and areas covered by an approved reasonable accommodation. Salting is done as needed. Please note that snow removal takes place during the day, not overnight. We appreciate your patience as we work to keep walkways safe for everyone!



Food Assistance

Salvation Army- (309) 837-4824

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 10a - 1p

Loaves and Fishes

Tuesdays- 10a -12p and 2p - 4p

The Crossing Food Pantry- (309) 836-7870

Thursdays- 5p - 6p (Drive up only)

Good Food Pantry- (309) 313-2049

Tuesdays and Thursday- 1p - 5p

Health and Hope Food Pantry- (309) 883-3018

1st and 3rd Tuesdays (6p - 7p) and Saturdays (9a - 10a)



Christmas Events

Eisenhower

December 13th, 2025

5:00 PM

Prairieview

December 13th, 2025

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Greenbriar

December 13th, 2025

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM



Christmas Trees

Real Christmas trees aren't allowed on the property. While festive, they're a fire risk once they dry out and can bring in pests. Please use artificial trees to help keep everyone safe and the property pest-free. Thanks for keeping the holidays bright and safe!



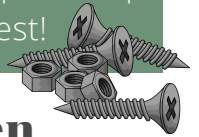
Smoking in Units

Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside our apartments, buildings, or within 25 feet of them. This includes cigarettes, vapes, hookahs, and marijuana. Even though marijuana is legal in Illinois, our property follows federal rules, so it is strictly prohibited. Please help keep our community healthy, safe, and clean by following all smoke-free guidelines.



New Siding

Please do not drill, screw, or mount anything into the siding of your unit. Prairieview has brand-new siding, and Fitch Manor's updates are underway. This work was a major investment, and we want it to stay in great shape for years to come. Damaging the siding may result in repair charges, so help us keep our buildings looking their best!



Community Garden

Please do not plant garden crops like tomatoes, pumpkins, or other produce in the grass near your unit. These areas must stay clear for maintenance, landscaping, and curb appeal. If you'd like to garden, there are designated community garden spaces available. Reach out to your property manager for details.



Space Heaters

Space heaters are not allowed on the property. They can easily cause fires, overload electrical circuits, and pose serious safety risks. Using one may result in adverse action to your tenancy. Please keep warm safely and follow all lease rules—your safety (and your neighbors') matters!

