

# Arizona Liberian News

Promoting Liberian Community  
Development and Success

Fall 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1

## Liberian Program Off to a Running Start

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 18 members of the Liberian community gathered for a meeting as part of the new Liberian Family Resource Program. The attendees had food and drinks and shared ideas and concerns about Liberian refugees in Phoenix.

The Liberian Family Resource Program was created earlier this year to help better meet the needs of the Liberian refugee community. The program is funded by a grant that the International Rescue Committee working with Catholic Social Services received from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR).

The grant provided funding for the hiring of two Liberian Adjustment Coordinators and one Liberian Community Development Coordinator. These three new employees will focus their efforts on providing and creating practical solutions to the problems faced by Liberian refugees in the Phoenix area.

The next community meeting will be held at the IRC on September 11th at 1:00 pm. Guest speakers will be there to present and discuss the Criminal Justice System and Fraud Awareness.

### Meet the New Liberian Program Staff



**Tamba Butty**  
**Liberian Adjustment Coordinator, IRC**  
Tamba joins the IRC after spending one year as a Community Service Volunteer. He earned his degree in General Forestry from Research Development International in Liberia. Tamba is working one-on-one with IRC clients to help transition to life in the United States.



**Massa Fahnbulleh**  
**Liberian Adjustment Coordinator, CSS**  
Massa graduated from the University of Liberia with a degree in General Agriculture. She spent many years working for the Forestry Department of Liberia and volunteering with the Society of Conservation of Liberia in rural areas of the country. In the years she spent as a refugee in West Africa, Massa helped found a refugee school to teach sewing and other skills. Massa is now working with CSS to provide essential case management to refugees in Phoenix.



**Carla Sandine**  
**Liberian Community Development Coordinator, IRC**  
Carla comes from Grand Canyon University where she is completing her degree in Political Science. She is working with the entire Liberian community of Phoenix to organize meetings and fieldtrips to help promote community involvement and success.

Inside this issue:

Back to School	2
Youth Program Activities	2
Renting Housing in the US	3
Calendar of Events	4
Community Resources	4

## Community News

### IT'S A GIRL!



Congratulations to Reginald Joy and Sando Ann-Marie Williams on the arrival of Hannah Michelle. Hannah was born on August 3rd, weighing in at 9 pounds and 14 ounces and stretching to 21.5 inches long. Hannah joins her parents and three brothers, Samuel (11), Kenneth (8), and Josiah (5).

Best wishes Williams family!

**Excited to share the news of a wedding, engagement, birth, or graduation?**

Deliver your announcement (including photo if you have one) to Carla Sandine via email at [carlas@their.org](mailto:carlas@their.org) or in person at the IRC office.

# Liberian Students Head **BACK TO SCHOOL**

## TIPS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS



- **Get to know your child's teachers**—the sooner the better. Attend school programs and parent conferences. However, if there is a problem or if your child has special needs do not wait for a program. Write a note or make an appointment to talk with teachers as early in the year as possible. It helps teachers to know everything they can about your child.
- **Share important information** that can make it easier for teachers to understand your son or daughter. Sometimes things that happen at home can affect how kids learn.

• **Find out what's expected.** Ask your child's teachers about homework, long-term projects and other special assignments.

• **Make sure your child gets to school on time each day.** Attendance is important. Learning builds day by day. Even the best teachers cannot do the job if your student is absent. The only time children should miss school is when they are ill.

• **Agree on a regular time for homework.** Be a good example by doing some work at the same time. While your child is doing schoolwork, you can pay bills or do other work of your own.

• **Show an interest in your child's school work.** Talk about what is going well—and what is not. The secret to getting your child to talk about school is to listen. Resist the urge to talk. Turn off the TV. Sit down. Make eye contact. If you show that you are interested enough to give your undivided attention, you may be surprised by how much you learn.

• **If your child seems to be having problems,** work out a way to have regular communication between you, your child and their teachers. Asking for an advance schedule of big assignments or projects from your child's teachers will help your child keep up with work.

## Here's the Help Teachers Want

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) asked teachers what they wished parents would do to help their children in school. Here's what teachers said:

- **Encourage you child to do her best.** Show you believe that education is important. Let her know you want her to do the best she possibly can.
- **Set a good example.** Actions really do speak louder than words. When you spend time reading, you show your child that reading is enjoyable and useful.
- **Emphasize academics.** School is your child's job. Other interests—sports, TV, part-time jobs, friends and games—must come after school.
- **Provide resources at home.** You don't need a lot of expensive equipment—but you should have a place for you child to study. The kitchen table works just fine after mealtime.

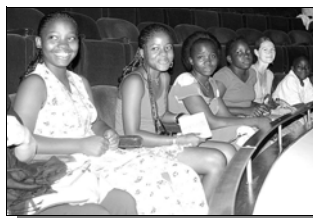
Quicktips courtesy of The Parent Institute ©1998

## Youth Program Events

**Teen Time** is back! Beginning October 3rd at Glendale Shadows Apartments on the following Mondays from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm: October 3, 17, 24; November 7, 14; December 5, 19.

**Tutoring for Tomorrow** will take place Wednesdays at 4:00 pm at 4788 West Bethany Home Road. If you are having trouble with English or need some extra help with homework and are between the ages of 11-19, this tutoring program is for you!

**Job Shadowing Event** with Matt Parsons, the Human Resources Manager of Home Depot. Parsons has invited the teens to his store to learn about the process of searching and applying for a job as well as providing a tour of the store and learning about the types of careers that Home Depot offers. The event will take place **Saturday, October 8th at 9:00 am.** Call Alison at 602-433-2440 x228 for more info or to sign-up.



Reine Krishna, Grace Videlentata, Marie Harmon, Decontee

Harmon, IRC's Alison Vargo, and Sam Williams enjoy the Herberger Theatre's musical production of Beauty and the Beast.

*\*Youth program activities are open to refugee youth from all agencies.*

## Did you recently move? Are you planning to move?

### Important things to consider when moving:

- You should immediately inform your resettlement agency that you are moving and provide them with your new address. You legally have ten days to notify the USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) of your move (USCIS is formerly the INS). Your resettlement agency can assist you with notifying USCIS.
- If you are the legal guardian of a minor and are planning to send the child to reunite with their parents somewhere else in the country you **MUST** inform your case manager so that they can assist you in following all the necessary legal procedures.
- When you move, your children may have to go to a new school. Transferring schools can be extremely hard for children and their education can suffer from it.

# Renting Housing in the United States: Tips for New Arrivals

## Your responsibilities:

### Pay Rent

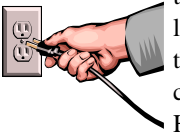


The lease tells you how much rent you must pay every month, when the rent is due, and where the rent must be mailed or delivered. Your most important responsibility is to **pay the rent by the due** date (which is usually the first day of the month). If you do not pay on time, the lease usually requires you to pay more money as a late fee. Late payment also is a cause for eviction. Failure to pay rent or repeated late payments will make it very difficult for you to rent an apartment somewhere else.

**Tips:** It is best to pay rent with a check or money order, rather than cash. If you mail a check to the landlord, send it a few days before the due date to be sure the landlord receives the check on time. If you deliver the rent to the landlord, get a written dated receipt signed by the person who takes your money. This is especially important if you pay in cash. The receipt is the only proof that you paid the rent on time.

### Pay Utilities

The lease specifies whether you or the landlord pays the cost of utilities: gas, electricity, water. In some leases, the amount you pay the landlord for rent includes the cost of utilities.



However, many leases require you to pay extra—either to the landlord or to the utility company—for utilities. If the utility bill is not paid on time, the service will be stopped. You are responsible for obtaining and paying for the telephone.

**Tips:** Avoid turning up the heat or air conditioning while the windows are open. Otherwise, your utility bill will be very expensive. Try wearing sweaters and socks instead of turning up the heat in the winter.

### Keep the Apartment Clean and Undamaged



American landlords expect that you will keep the apartment and the hallway outside your door clean. Food should be stored carefully so it doesn't attract bugs.

Trash and garbage must be taken regularly to the containers outside the apartment designated for them. It is also very important that you try hard not to damage or break anything in the apartment (including appliances, curtains, windows, doors, furniture and light fixtures) and that you do not put stains on the rugs or holes in the walls.

**The landlord will require you to pay for any damage to the unit.**

#### **Tips to avoid charges for damage:**

- *Be careful hanging up pictures so the wall is not damaged.*
- *Do not pour grease down the sink—put it in an empty can and throw it away in the trash.*
- *Do not take the furniture outside.*
- *Use only a small amount of soap for the dishwasher and washing dishes.*
- *Teach your children not to play in the curtains, to mark on the walls, or to stand on the furniture.*
- *Do not put too many clothes or lots of soap in the washing machine.*
- *Always run water while operating the garbage disposal.*
- *Do not put bones, fruit pits, onion peels or celery down a garbage disposal.*
- *Do not flush paper towels, diapers, etc. down the toilet.*

### Avoid Many People in the Unit

Most leases specifically limit the number of people who can live in the unit. Although friends or family are allowed to visit, they should not stay longer than a week or two unless the landlord specifically approves.

**You can be evicted if too many people are living in your apartment.**

### Be a Good Neighbor



Landlords expect you to respect your neighbors and their need for peace and quiet. Loud music, loud talking and children screaming or running around, particularly after 10 pm, are not appropriate. If you have problems with other tenants, try to work out a solution with the help of the landlord. Help keep the outside areas clean. Put away your children's toys so they are not in the hallway or on the lawn. Park in the proper space.

## Terms to Know

**Landlord**—A person or company that owns a rental unit or complex.

**Tenant**—If you are the person who is renting the apartment or home, you are called a tenant.

**Property Manager**—Often employed by the landlord to live in a unit at the rental location and to take care of any business related to the renting and physical care of the property.

**Utilities**—Services such as water, gas, electricity, telephone and cable.

Sometimes the cost of utilities is covered in your rent payment, but you should always find out what bills you are responsible for.

**Rental Application**—The form you fill out and return to the landlord or property manager if you are interested in renting a place you have seen.

**Lease**—A legal written agreement to rent a property or part of a property from the owner.

**Eviction**—A legal process where a landlord forces a tenant to move out of the property involuntarily and usually permanently.





The International Rescue Committee  
 Phoenix Regional Office  
 4750 N. Black Canyon Hwy  
 Suite 200  
 Phoenix, AZ 85017  
 Phone: 602-433-2440  
 Fax: 602-433-2881

Would you or someone you know like to be on our mailing list?  
 Contact Carla at [carlas@theirc.org](mailto:carlas@theirc.org) or 602-433-2440 x247

**[ We're on the web!  
[www.theirc.org](http://www.theirc.org) ]**

## Calendar of Events

## Community Resources for Refugees

**September 11** Join us for a Liberian Community Workshop at the IRC Office 3rd Floor, Sunday at 4:00 pm. Topics will include The Criminal Justice System and Fraud Protection.

Are you interested in learning to read, write, speak English, or prepare to take the GED? **Literacy Volunteers of Maricopa County** offers FREE tutoring and classes. To set up an appointment call 602-274-3430 between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.

The Washington Adult Center will be offering a **Citizenship Preparation Class** September 9—October 28. Call 602-262-6971 to confirm availability.

The **Fresh Start Women's Foundation** offers numerous services to women who are striving for emotional or financial independence. Services include employment resources, legal assistance, mentoring, specialty library and workshops. **The Fresh Start Women's Resource Center** is located at 1130 E. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ. Call 602-252-8494 for more information.

### Financial Training Classes

#### Budgeting and Banking

September 12 5:30 pm—7:30 pm  
 September 16 9:00 am—11:00 am

#### Job Readiness

August 29 9:00 am—11:00 am  
 September 12 9:00 am—11:00 am  
 September 26 9:00 am—11:00 am

#### Maintaining a Small Business

August 31 5:30 pm—7:00 pm  
 September 28 5:30 pm—7:00 pm

#### Understanding Credit

September 26 5:30 pm—7:30 pm  
 September 30 9:00 am—11:00 am

#### Home Ownership

September 10 9:00 am—1:00 pm  
 For information contact Jon at the IRC at [jonv@theirc.org](mailto:jonv@theirc.org) or 602-433-2440 x234

### ESL Classes

#### Sterling Place Apartments

Community Room  
 4235 N. 35th Ave.  
 Tuesdays 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
 Wednesdays 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
 Thursdays 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

#### Los Compadres Apartments

Community Room  
 3518 W. Dunlap Ave.  
 Mondays 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm  
 Wednesdays 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm  
 Saturdays 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

#### Somali Association of Arizona

3614 E. McDowell, Suite 210  
 Wednesdays 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm  
 Thursdays 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm  
 Fridays 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

For information about the above classes call  
 Catholic Social Service 602-944-1819 x21