



PCHA *Today*

AN EXCITING NEW DIRECTION...

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PCHA opens new Home Ownership Resource Center!

Owning a home seems out of reach for so many people, especially in today's economy. Even with declining home prices, for many in affordable and assisted housing, the dream of owning their own home is just that - a dream.

Rabon Sanders knows all too well about circumstances getting in his way for the proverbial American Dream.

Self-employed for 23 years, owning an accounting business and then consumer electronics business, Sanders had it all: family, career, success, health. And then a rare disease called Post-Polio Syndrome from a sickness he had when he was three years old, caused his body to gradually weaken until he lost his ability to walk. Not only did he lose his ability to walk, he lost his health, his family, his business and his money.



Disabled and on a fixed income, for the last 12 years, Sanders lived in public housing. He said "I lost my pride and my hope." After he began participating in the Housing Choice Voucher program Sanders began pursuing a variety of first time home buyers programs through local government agencies. Eventually he received approval for assistance from the City of St. Petersburg's WIN program after taking steps necessary to meet the qualifications of the program. Still, his mortgage payment would eat up a very large portion of his monthly income, making homeownership difficult on his fixed income. When PCHA recently reignited its Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Program, Sanders was ready to go.

Sanders says he "can't say enough about the PCHA's home ownership program. I'm so grateful that they took the initiative to open it back up." Now that he is settled into his new home, he has taken on the task of helping others reach similar goals that he has had the privilege of achieving through beneficial programs such as PCHA's.

Because June is National Home Ownership month and he has such a fascinating life journey, Sanders was recognized at the June Board meeting as an inspiration to others and as the first homeowner since PCHA's program was reinstated. Speaking to PCHA's Board he said, "I just appreciate your efforts tremendously. It's a time when there are opportunities that many people



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can take advantage of. I'm proud to live where I do and I haven't had that pride of living quarters for quite a long time."

He thanked Executive Director Debbie Johnson and the Board and said, "It's unbelievably wonderful. I couldn't have done it without you."

On June 1st, PCHA opened its Homeownership Resource Center, located at 11479 Ulmerton Road in Largo. The Center houses information about local and state homeownership programs, first time homebuyer information and the HCV Homeownership Program for HCV participants. The Center is open to the public. For more information about PCHA's Homeownership Resource Center and programs, please call the Resident Services and Programs Department at 727-443-7684, ext. 3046.

About Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA):

Formed in 1965 and governed by a five member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Governor of the State of Florida, the Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) provides housing and rental assistance to a total of more than 4,500 families in Pinellas County. The authority is proud to be rated by HUD as a "High Performing" agency. More information about the authority's programs and services can be found at www.pin-cha.org.

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