**There's No Place Like Home for First Time Homeowners - August 2015**

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**Owning a home is the foundation on which families can build a legacy. For a lot of people, becoming a homeowner means independence and increased self-esteem.**

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**However, many potential homeowners are unsure how to get started or if they are financially ready for that next step. That’s where Family Housing Advisory Services lends a helping hand.**

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**Family Housing Advisory Services is a non-profit organization founded in 1968 to help first time homeowners learn steps it takes to own your own home. Today the agency serves more than 730 people and operates from its main offices in North Omaha, South Omaha, Council Bluffs, Iowa and Chadron.**

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**Offering classes through six different programs, Family Housing Advisory Services teaches clients about establishing and maintaining good credit, working with realtors and learning aspects of financing. For example, the financial fitness education workshop gives clients monthly individual budget counseling and financial goal planning.**

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**During this course, clients are educated on the understanding and implementing of good money management. From this class they have been able to repair 619 of their clients’ credit and within the last year alone 87 clients have become homeowners after participation in the workshops.**

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**Donna McFadden, director of the Homeownership Program, says it is one of the six programs geared toward building a strong understanding of what it means to be a homeowner.**

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**McFadden has worked for the Family Housing Advisory Services for 19 years and says she loves her job.**

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**“I love giving back to the community.” “Growing up I knew the importance of having a home and what a foundation it is for the families and the children growing up within those homes.” McFadden says. “I want to help first-time owners not only get a home but keep it for their families--for them to have something to build upon, growth is what matters to me.”**

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**A University of Nebraska at Omaha graduate in criminal justice, McFadden says her courses in social work helped form her decision to help those in need.**

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**“A lot of the people that come into my office are first-generation homeowners and single mothers, so we want to prepare them for the real world and what to expect,” McFadden says. “Buying a home is a lengthy process,”**

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**Family Housing Advisory Services provides monthly classes that help throughout every stage that leads up to and includes home buying. Those classes include Pre-Purchase Education, Financial Fitness, Omaha Earned Income Tax Credit and Tenant Services.**

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**“We have classes throughout the year that range from mornings to later in the evening. We want to accommodate everyone,” McFadden says. “We understand that people are out in our community making a living and doing the best they can right now, so we want to show them that we understand. Building them up so they can purchase their own home will be a reward well worth all their efforts.”**

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