

# Tenants Who Expose Racism & Unhealthy Mold Are Called Liars by SAHA Bosses

By Pancho Valdez

EDITOR'S NOTE: Frank Valdez has written about SAHA's lack of response to tenants of elder housing in previous issues of La Voz de Esperanza. Most recently in the July/August 2019 issue.

After complaining for over six months and our issues being ignored by the local news media, KABB TV reporter, Darian Trotter, took a big step and exposed how a lack of security resulted in over a half dozen cars being vandalized at Villa

Tranchese, a SAHA building for the aged and disabled. Over the past year, SAHA (San Antonio Housing Authority) has cut its security budget by 43%. Yet the SAHA administration building, itself, has armed security, a metal detector and bullet proof glass separating the public from the receptionist.

Darien Trotter's coworker, Morgan Burrell, went on to expose the blatant racial discrimination at Chatham another SAHA building located on the Southside that serves the aged and disabled. There, a small group of Mexican American tenants use derogatory language towards Black and White tenants when they were not allowed to use the Community Room, an amenity paid for by all the tenants. These culprits are snitches for SAHA and have a history of violence, but are protected by Marie Flores the property manager. Upper SAHA management is well aware of the discrimination, but ignores it. Recently, the Texas Attorney General's office reprimanded SAHA for obstructing the discrimination case of James Hamilton a tenant union activist.

At Blanco, also a building for the aged and disabled, SAHA management has ignored a long history of mold and mildew in the building. Its response is to paint over the mold which has caused some residents to become ill. Ruth Rodríguez is one of those who is ill. She has been struggling with SAHA for over seven years. Her concerns caught the interest of District 1 City Councilman Roberto Treviño. Treviño made an unannounced visit to the Blanco apartments and saw for himself the mold and other hazardous conditions.

Ruth Rodriguez was recently appointed to the SAHA Board of Commissioners by Mayor Ron Nirenberg. She is also an active member of the San Antonio Tenants Union.

Despite evidence from the State Attorney General and Councilman Treviño, SAHA refuses to address the problems and called us liars!

In late October a group of tenants from the Alazan-Apache apartments publicly exposed SAHA's illegal practice of lease violations and evictions. These folks were also referred to as liars.

The San Antonio Housing Authority is a federally funded agency. SAHA tenants also pay rent. We feel that SAHA is violating our



Vandalism at SAHA high rise apartments. Credit: news4sanantonio.com

right to "a decent, sanitary and safe living environment" as mandated by HUD. We also feel that SAHA bosses are not qualified for their positions as they are not respectful of mostly Black and Brown low income tenants.

At the local level Council Representatives, Treviño and Viagran, have been helpful. At the federal level only Congressman Joaquin Castro has been helpful.

Despite long interviews the Express-News hasn't published much. The San Antonio Heron has published info on Alazan-Apache as has the Rivard Report.

We need your assistance as well. Contact SAHA CEO David Nisivoccia at: david\_nisivoccia@SAHA.org. Demand that he respect the rights of all SAHA tenants. Also contact the mayor and your Congressional Representative.

Together we can bring justice to SAHA tenants!

BIO: Pancho Valdez is a retired social worker and resident of SAHA. He is also an organizer for the San Antonio Tenants Union. Submitted: December 17, 2019.



## Voiceless

J.  
Boca. Cresta y Lengua.  
Bone bridging teeth and palate.  
The mouth.  
A palette to create.  
Tongue crosses the bridge  
Creating friction.  
Fricative. Friction. Fricción.  
Voiced or Voiceless.  
Ciera la boca  
Be voiceless.  
Better.  
You can't create problems that way.  
Ssshhh.



—Nayelli Mejia

BIO: Nayelli Mejia is currently studying Linguistics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. This poem is a product of her fascination with language, especially the experiences and emotions that our words have the power to convey.