

AHFA Kids Financial Literacy Outreach

Alabama Housing Finance Authority
Communications: Integrated Campaign

HFA Staff Contact

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Alabama Housing Finance Authority

AHFA Kids: Children's Financial Literacy Outreach

Category/Subcategory: Communications/Integrated Campaign (NEW)

As a servicer of home mortgage loans, we see up close the need for financial literacy. But learning about money – budgeting and saving – can seem, well, boring. Knowing that our upbringing plays a major role in shaping our relationship with money, we decided to focus on our children – our future homeowners – and make financial literacy fun. Every person who understands how to manage finances and build wealth improves not only their future, but also the futures of their families and communities.

Taking advantage of untapped skills of staff across our departments, we built an intentional, vibrant teaching model to promote critical thinking skills and healthy development in children. To this end, we created “AHFA Kids,” a multidimensional financial literacy program. It includes “FUNancial Literacy” classes, where children are taught basic concepts using interactive games, props, movement, music, and practical problem solving. We also built a video production team from existing staff to make short, colorfully animated videos about money. By making learning fun, we motivate kids to take money matters seriously, and it lays a foundation for weightier lessons in the future.

Our outreach began in April 2022 as an observance of Financial Literacy Month. The idea for the program began taking shape the previous year as our staff discussed delinquency in our portfolio and the common yet surprising misconceptions among our homeowners and renters. We wanted to develop a way to address those issues more proactively, and all signs pointed to the need for basic financial knowledge.

Our overarching message is, “You’re never too young and it's never too late to learn about financial literacy.” Research shows that children begin forming financial habits at a much earlier age than one would expect: They develop money-related skills and attitudes as early as age 3, with many habits set between the ages of 7 to 9. The key is to incorporate smart financial decision-making into everyday life as early as possible, before the stakes are too high.

Those early conversations culminated in a pilot program for employees’ children and grandchildren. The initial class focused on the difference between needs and wants, featuring farm-themed games and activities. Children made their own piggy banks, learned the chicken dance, watched “Freddy Finance” the puppet decide what to do with spare change, and more.

“Our mission is to create an environment where kids get excited about financial learning,” said the program’s coordinator, Daun Pittman. “It doesn’t have to be boring, either. Games like Monopoly, The Game of Life, Payday, and more can teach important lessons about financial literacy. By starting when kids are small, they’ll be better equipped to make financial decisions in adulthood.”

Topics covered by the program so far include the difference between needs and wants; the importance of saving for a rainy day; counting the value of U.S. coins; the need for a budget; and how to earn, save, spend, and give. Early in the process, we developed “Bud,” a bright blue, squishy, lovable but hapless mascot whose foibles become the focus of our storylines and lessons. The Bud character appears on all of our printed materials, videos, web pages, trade show banners, coloring books, and other giveaways.

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Creative partnerships have been a key component of the program's success. For example:

- An upcoming class is scheduled for foster children and their caregivers through the **Elmore County Department of Human Resources**.
- We have reached out to **bankers and mortgage lenders** who participate in other AHFA programs, offering the kids' classes in conjunction with their existing homebuyer education efforts.
- Our most recent offering was a space-themed class coordinated through the **U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville**. We invited our servicing customers in the area and partnered with **Morgan County Habitat for Humanity** to include their homeowners' children. The Habitat affiliate then reached out to the local **United Way** and the **Boys and Girls Club** to extend additional invitations. With blacklights, games, songs, and puppet shows featuring our mascot, "Bud," and his sidekick, "Galaxy," we hosted 20 kids and their parents, and enabled them to tour the popular Space and Rocket Center afterward.
- We have been invited by **Habitat for Humanity Tuscaloosa** to prepare a class for children whose families are currently building homes. The kids' class time will count toward the program's sweat equity requirements, giving even young household members a chance to contribute toward their family's achievement of homeownership.

We continue to design class offerings to tie into unique state landmarks. Next in the works is a series on borrowing and lending. Inspired by "Need a toy? Take a toy! Have a toy? Leave a toy!" beach box signs, our mascot Bud will visit **Gulf State Park** on the Alabama coast. Its newly renovated lodge, previously destroyed by Hurricane Ivan and rebuilt with Deepwater Horizon oil spill funding, has been nationally recognized with gold-level LEED certification for sustainability and ecosystem protection. Its focus on renewable resources "borrowed" and returned to the environment makes it an ideal setting for a class on the borrowing and repayment of funds.

Other facets of the program are flourishing as well. We are regularly adding content to the AHFA Kids web site, highlighting events on social media, and inviting subscribers to join a dedicated mailing list for our children's events and online activities. All of these marketing techniques and teaching tools could be customized and replicated by any HFA seeking to educate and prepare young people to make better financial decisions as adults.

AHFA Kids demonstrates an effective use of resources. The video equipment we purchased for this project is also being used by every AHFA division for training videos, employee spotlights, customer profiles, and program promotion. Capitalizing on our in-house talent, from concept to storyline to execution, also keeps the program budget-friendly. We produce our own videos, with characters based on and voiced by our employees, family, and friends. Our artwork featuring the Bud character is drawn by an employee's daughter, a college student majoring in graphic design. Our program coordinator is a former schoolteacher with an extraordinary ability to connect and communicate with kids.

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We believe that our children's financial literacy outreach is producing a host of benefits -- for AHFA, for industry partners, for current and potential customers, and for the kids who get to participate. Internally, the outside-the-box thinking poured into this effort have ignited employee enthusiasm and creativity. Every element has been accomplished by a small group of employees who have added these tasks to their regular duties. Many more have participated by helping with set-up, photography, and sound during the events, promoting the activities, and giving voice to the video characters. All are expanding their skills and discovering new talents in the process -- keys to employee satisfaction.

Externally, these efforts have generated positive publicity for AHFA and its commitment to homeownership, helping us spread the word about what we offer and how we help strengthen communities. The classes have enabled us to collaborate with several agencies and groups outside our normal circle and to promote our state's attractions. The children, of course, enjoy themselves as we help put them on a path toward becoming better-informed, financially responsible consumers. The parents accompanying their children benefit from our reminders of good financial stewardship and learn from the lessons as well. The program continues to be an original, resourceful and inventive addition to our communications toolkit for affordable housing.

VIDEOS

Mission Accomplished: FUNancial Literacy Rockets to Huntsville - YouTube



AHFA Kids | Bud Goes to Space Camp - YouTube



Let's Learn About Needs VS Wants - YouTube



Video Provides Highlights from Recent Financial Literacy Event - YouTube



Freddy Finance Learns Good Savings Habits - YouTube

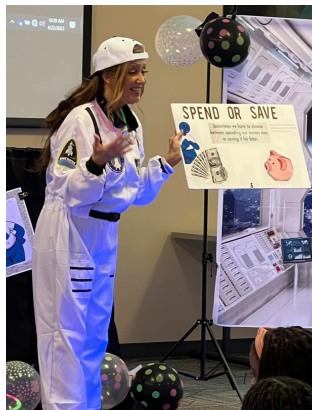


AHFAKids: Learn about U.S. coins with Bud - YouTube



EVENTS

FUNancial Literacy Rockets to Huntsville | April 22, 2023

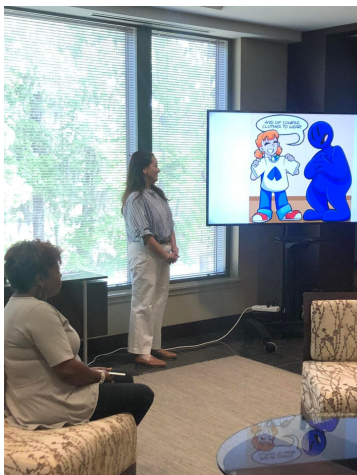


EVENTS

Down Home at Halcyon Farm | April 30, 2022



Financial Literacy Campaign Announcement to AHFA Staff | April 12, 2022

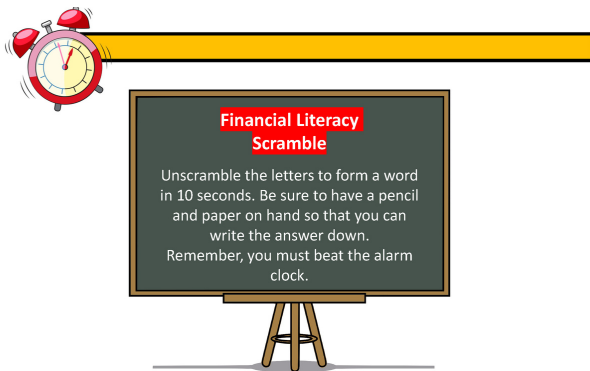


FLYERS



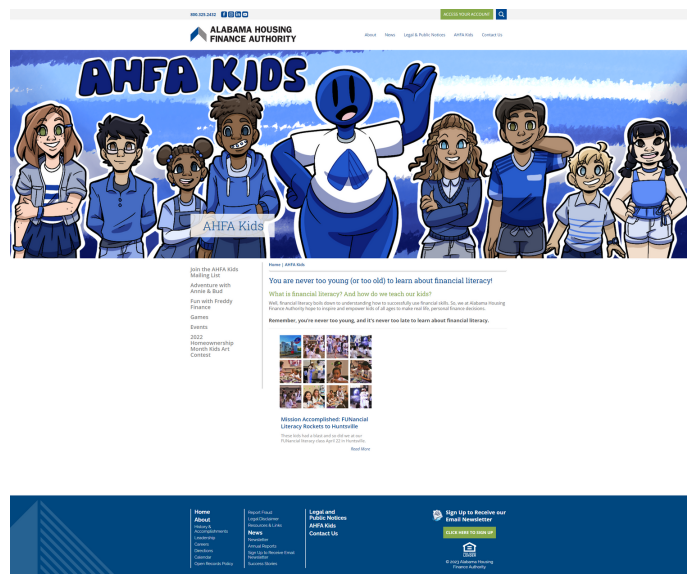
GAMES

AHFA Kids: Financial Literacy Scramble Game - YouTube

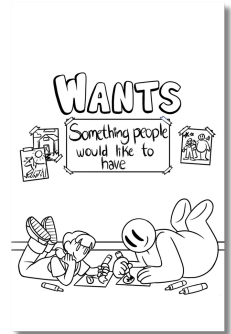
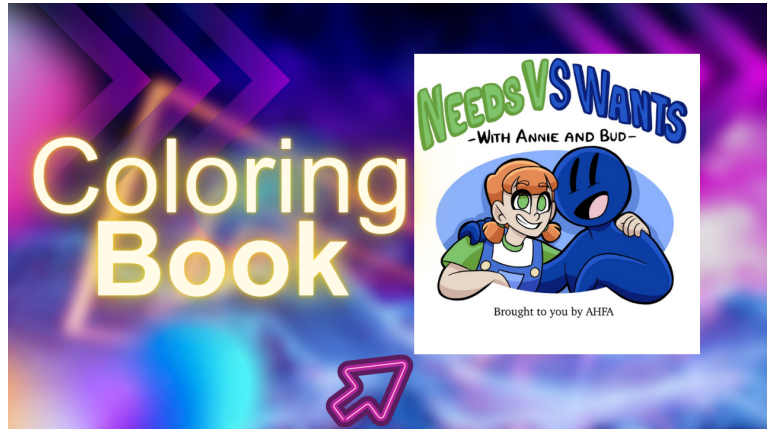
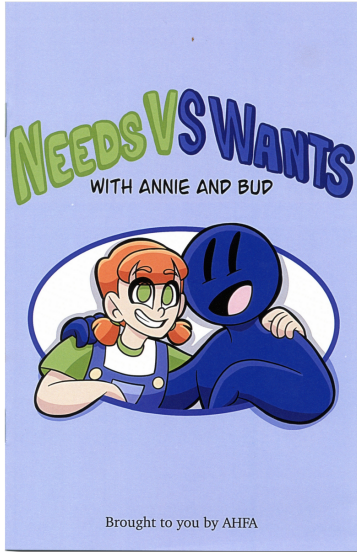


WEBSITE RESOURCES

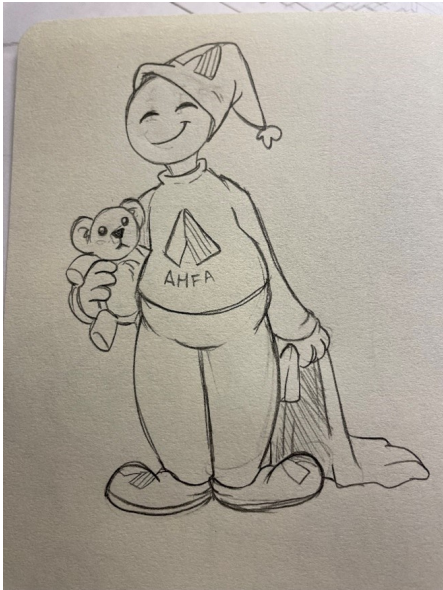
Dedicated section of web site for links to videos, games, upcoming events, and more



DOWNLOADABLE ACTIVITIES



Artist's original sketches of our financial literacy mascot, Bud



SOCIAL MEDIA

Alabama Housing Finance Authority
April 12, 2022

AHFA is pleased to announce that during National Financial Literacy Month, we are launching a campaign that is key to the long-term success of the families we work with - financial literacy! The mission of AHFA is to provide homeowner and rental opportunities for Alabamians. Adding financial education as a central part of our program will help us achieve that goal.

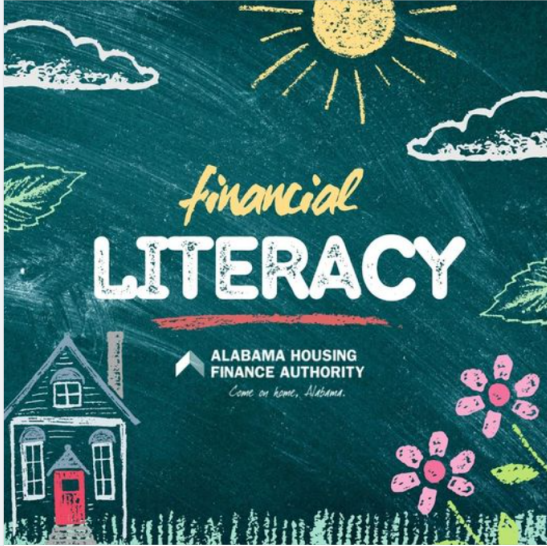
Our campaign includes the creation of the AHFA Kids page on our website (<https://www.ahfa.com/ahfa-kids>). The page contains specific content aimed to children and will provide a wide range of smart, engaging, and fun content that will give Alabama kids new ways of handling and understanding money. We've already produced two videos for this page, with more planned in the future.

Adult education-focused content can be found in the homebuyer (<https://www.ahfa.com/homebuyers/homebuyer-resources>) and renter sections (<https://www.ahfa.com/renters/rental-resources>) of our website. Additionally, our Investing in You series will focus on content created for adults covering five key principals of financial literacy: invest, save, spend, earn and protect.

These resources are a home-grown, collaborative effort within the Authority - various staff members worked together to create the concept, write scripts, and produce these videos and resources.

Financial Literacy principles apply to all stages of life in unique ways. At AHFA, we believe families can work together to stay smart about money.

#AHFA #ComeOnHomeAlabama



Alabama Housing Finance Authority
April 20, 2022


Thanks to WSFA-TV for inviting Single-Family Administrator Carrie Hamaker to appear on Alabama Live today to promote our financial literacy campaign!

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#AHFA #ComeOnHomeAlabama




Alabama Housing Finance Authority
March 29

Join us at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center!
AHFA Kids Coming to Huntsville Saturday, April 22
10 a.m. to noon

Join Bud and friends for a FREE FUNancial literacy class for kids ages 5-12. They'll learn about earning, saving, spending, and giving and will enjoy blacklights, puppets, games, giveaways, and more. Each participant and an adult chaperone will receive wristbands for touring the Space and Rocket Center immediately following the event.

Seating is limited, so reserve your spot today! For full details and registration information, please click below and register now: <https://bit.ly/3ZvQMxc>

#AHFA #ComeOnHomeAlabama #AHFAkids



AHFA.COM
Home | Alabama Housing Finance Authority Sign up

Alabama Housing Finance Authority
February 16

AHFA is seeking to partner with Alabama banks to add a children's component to existing homebuyer education efforts.

"We saw a need in our state for basic financial literacy training for children," said Carrie Hamaker, AHFA's single-family administrator. "The earlier we can teach our kids about financial responsibility, the better equipped they'll be to develop good habits and make informed spending decisions as adults."


AHFA is offering the kids' sessions in conjunction with Alabama banks who participate in its Step Up program, which offers down payment assistance for homeowners earning less than \$130,600. Designed for children ages 6 and up and subject to availability, the classes are designed to complement banks' adult homebuyer education courses, first-time homebuyer seminars, and other community outreach events.

AHFA has created coloring books, kid-friendly giveaways, interactive online games, and short videos explaining the differences between needs and wants, how to count U.S. coins, good savings habits, and more. Also in the works is a partnership with the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville to present a field trip for children.

"Our classes so far have been very well-received," said Hamaker. "Our message is that you're never too young and it's never too late to learn financial literacy."

Sample videos and other resources can be viewed at [ahfa.com/ahfa-kids](https://www.ahfa.com/ahfa-kids). For further information on co-hosting a class or event with AHFA, please call Carrie Hamaker at 334-244-9200.

#AHFA #ComeOnHomeAlabama



Statewide Bankers Association notice sent to 1,250 members



February 21 - 22
Credit Conference
Valley Hotel
Homewood
[more info](#)
[register](#)

April 12
Legislative Day
Montgomery

June 11-14
Annual Convention & Marketplace
The Grand Floridian
Orlando, Fla.

July 13-15
B2L Summer Leadership Conference
The Henderson Beach Resort & Spa
Destin, Fla.

August 3-5
CEO, Bank Exec & Directors' Conference
The Grand Hotel
Point Clear

Oct 22-27
Alabama Banking School
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel
Montgomery

AHFA Banks on Financial Literacy for Kids



The Alabama Housing Finance Authority is seeking to partner with Alabama banks to add a children's component to existing homebuyer education efforts.

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