

COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

Survey Aims for Men Who Love Men

We at NMAC are in the final year of a project to develop an action plan to address the persistent and disproportionate impact HIV has on black gay and bisexual men. As part of the project, we are circulating a survey to better understand perspectives and perceptions among black gay, bisexual and same-gender loving men around modalities and structural barriers to prevention and care services. This survey will contribute to both the action plan and help us determine which resources to highlight on an online resource/educational appli-

cation we are developing called RISE (Resources to Improve, Strengthen and Empower). If you are a black gay, bisexual or same-gender loving man we hope that you will take a moment to complete the brief survey and share with your networks. If not, we ask that you please consider sharing with any colleagues, friends or loved ones who may be willing to participate and help us to shed light on the needs of this critical, but under-served, population. To complete the survey, copy and paste the survey's URL [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RISE_2012] into your internet browser's address bar.

Free Class for

Families with Mental Health Issues

For people whose adult family members live with mental illness. Learn communication and problem-solving skills, as well as how to deal with crisis, in a 12-week class taught by specially trained volunteers whose own family members live with mental illness. Thursday evening classes start Jan 10 at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center. Exact time and location will be given upon registration. Call to register. National Alliance on Mental Illness; free; pre-registration required; 503-228-5692. www.namimultnomah.org

Moments continued from page 3

His mother took the photo in August after casts set on Malik's legs to strengthen them had been taken off.

"My cheerful and determined young man helped me to realize what matters in life and what doesn't," she said.

"Malik is a very happy, easy going young man, not much can hold him back, not even being stuck in casts. I also love how he's

rocking that t-shirt!"

For some, 2012 was the year not just of striking out on to new journeys, but of returning home.

Jessica Munoz from California, U.S., was thrilled to be reunited with her soldier husband on his return from Afghanistan. The poignant moment when she was reunited with her husband was captured by her friend, Libby Lugo.

"My friend literally grabbed the camera out of my hands and pushed me in the right direction [to her husband]," she said.

"All the stress and fear and pain suddenly were replaced with love and magic and joy. I felt like I had gotten something precious back that was taken from me."

Clock Ticking On Mortgage Tax Break For Struggling Homeowners

By Les Christie

NEW YORK (CNN-Money) -- A tax break that has saved struggling homeowners from paying thousands of dollars to the IRS is just days away from expiring.

If the Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Act of 2007 does not get extended by Congress by the end of the year, homeowners will have to start paying income taxes on the portion of their mortgage that is forgiven in a foreclosure, short sale or principal reduction.

That means if someone owes \$150,000 on their home and it sells for \$100,000 in a foreclosure auction, they could owe taxes on the remaining \$50,000. For someone in the 25% tax bracket, that would mean paying \$12,500 in taxes on the foreclosure. Similar taxes would apply for amounts that were forgiven in short sales and principal reductions.

"Allowing the act to expire would harm these families and their communities and it would run counter to current loss mitigation efforts," wrote Tim Pawlenty, president of the Financial Services Roundtable, Mike Calhoun, president of the Center for Responsible Lending, and John Dalton, president of the Housing Policy Council in a letter to the Senate Finance Committee.

So far, though, very little has been done to extend the act as Republicans and Democrats continue to butt heads over the fiscal cliff.

Many mortgage borrowers would be affected. More than 50,000 homeowners lose homes to foreclosure each month. Meanwhile, the number of short sales has tripled over the past three years to a rate of about half a million a year. And, under the terms of the \$25 billion foreclosure abuse settlement, roughly one million borrowers may have their mortgage debt lowered through principal reductions over the next couple of years.

"If there ever was a no-brainer in housing policy, this would be it," said Jaret Seiberg, a policy analyst for Guggenheim Securities.

Congress may return to the act after the other fiscal cliff issues are resolved, but by then the housing market will have taken a hit, said Elise Brooks Perkins, communications director for the Financial Services Roundtable. "It can be done retroactively, but the lag time will have a chilling effect on homeowners considering a short-sale," she said.

Most short sellers will not follow through on sales to closing without debt forgiveness in place. Instead they'll fight foreclosure, prolonging the housing crisis.

Congressman Brad Miller, however, said he doesn't see debt forgiveness passing unless it's part of a larger fiscal cliff deal.

Still, the price tag for the such an exemption could make it a point of contention, said Seiberg. The office of Sen. Max Baucus,

who heads the Senate Finance Committee, estimated the cost of a one-year extension at \$1.3 billion.

Even if Congress allowed the mortgage debt forgiveness to expire, not all borrowers who lose their home to foreclosure, sell their home in a short sale or have their principal reduced will take a tax hit. If the debt is discharged in a bankruptcy, no tax is due. And anyone who is insolvent -- meaning they have more debt than assets -- at the time the debt was forgiven would not have to pay the tax.

And in some states like California, certain borrowers are protected against paying the tax because of the way the state treats foreclosures.



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