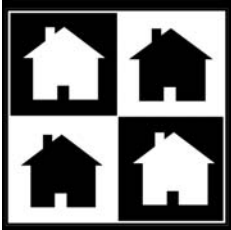


The Housing Center news

Advocacy Research & Education

June 2004



The Housing Center Hosts Educational Seminars Related to Access to Housing for the Disabled

The Housing Center hosted two professional fair housing educational seminars this Spring. These two seminars were made possible with a generous grant from the **Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening Foundation**.

The Housing Center hosted a seminar for Social Workers covering Access to Housing for the Disabled. Co-sponsored by the *Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University* for Continuing Education hours, the forty (40) participants spent 6 hours learning about accessibility issues and housing specifically for the disabled. Presenters included: **Mike Foley**, Executive Director of Cleveland Tenants Organization; **Carole Heyward**, Community

Advocacy Clinic, Cleveland Marshall College of Law and Housing Center Board Member and **Miriam Solomon Plax** with NAMI-Metro Cleveland.

The second professional educational seminar was held on May 4th and covered Fair Housing Law for the Disabled: New Construction and Building Codes and was designed for Design-build, architects, developers and plans examiners.

The first speaker at this event was Housing Center Board Member and Law Professor at the Community Advocacy Clinic at the Cleveland Marshall College of Law, **Carole Heyward**. Ms. Heyward discussed Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines in multi-family housing construction. Carole also dis-

cussed ADA requirements in public spaces including the sales and rental offices and rest-rooms for public use.

John Picard, Registered Architect and owner of John Patrick Picard Architects, Inc. was invited to the seminar to speak about the roles and responsibilities of architects in designing multi-family housing. He outlined the basic steps to comply with housing accessibility laws, and emphasized the responsibility of the architects because if the designs for the complex are flawed, then the buildings will not be accessible. In his research, John has found that one of the major obstacles to the production of accessible housing has been inadequacies of the architectural documents used in construction of housing.

The final speaker for the day was **Jan Sokolnicki** from The Ohio Board of Building Standards, who spoke about the Ohio

Building Code and particularly Chapter 11, which covers Accessibility Guidelines. Mr. Sokolnicki pointed out that developers, contractors, architects and plans examiners must share the blame for the lack of compliance with the accessibility guidelines in multi-family housing. Jan also helped make it clear that if the city building departments are not adequately reviewing building plans, then a complaint can be filed with the Ohio Board of Building Standards for inspection and clarification.

"I enjoyed each of the presenters helping each other with the information and clarification on responses" - Seminar Attendee

"Indeed a great production and experience. The concern and dedication as well as the facts/handouts exhibited are above average" Seminar Attendee

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opensoc.org](http://www.opensoc.org) or call (215) 546-
0511.**SUPREME COURT VICTORY FOR THE
DISABLED.**

In a major victory today, 5-17-04, a divided Supreme Court concluded that states are not exempt from provisions of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the disabled deserve equal access and accommodations at government buildings such as court houses and schools, in all states. Justice Stevens, writing for the 5-4 majority, said “previous government efforts have failed to adequately remedy a pattern of unequal treatment in the administration of a wide range of public services, programs, and activities including the penal system, public education and voting.” The key swing vote for the majority was cast by Justice Sandra Day O’Connor. Dissenting were justices

Rehnquist, Scalia, Kennedy and Thomas.

The case was prompted by a case brought in Tennessee by George Lane, Beverly Jones (a wheelchair bound certified court reporter) and four other disabled people. After a car crash in 1997, Mr. Lane lost part of his leg and was unable to walk. He faced misdemeanor charges from the accident and when Mr. Lane had to appear at a Pol County courthouse that had no elevator, he was forced to drag himself up two flights of stairs to attend a hearing. He refused to do so for a second hearing and was arrested for failing to appear, even though he had told the judge beforehand of his situation.

**NOFHA PRESENTS THE 7TH ANNUAL FAIR HOUSING
LUNCHEON & AWARDS**

The Northeast Ohio Fair Housing Alliance (NOFHA- an association of organizations and governmental bodies from Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties developed to address regional fair housing issues in Northeast Ohio), hosted The 7th Annual Fair Housing Awards Luncheon and Workshop Series on Thursday April 29th at the John Spitzer Conference Center at Lorain County Community College. The event included a panel discussion about the History & Impact of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio, which was moderated by Sylvia Duvall from the City of Lorain Fair Housing Board. Panelists included Mary Petro from

the Ohio Department of Commerce, David Ashenurst, a Consultant for Giving Advice, and Alec Hagerty a Broker/Speaker Trainer from Lehman Johnson.

Paul Bellamy, the Director of the Lorain County Reinvestment Coalition moderated the second panel entitled “What Does Financial Literacy in the Schools have to do with Fair Housing?” Panelists included George Barany, Director of Working for Empowerment Through Community Organizing (WECO Fund Inc.), Martha Wise, Representative from the State Board of Education, and Louise Gissendaner, from Fifth Third Bank. The panel sessions were followed by the keynote address from Professor Michael Seng,

the Co-Executive Director of The John Marshall Law School Fair Housing Legal Support Center. Mr. Seng’s presentation linked Equality in Education (*Brown v. Board of Education*), Fair Housing and the economically advantaged, and how all of these individual problems fit into the big picture of Civil Rights. Over 100 people from Lorain, Cuyahoga and Lake Counties were in attendance at this year’s luncheon. Fair Housing Awards were given to two organizations, Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential for Independent Living (LEAP—CIL), and the Lorain County Association of REALTORS (LOCAR), and individual awards were presented to Mary Butler, and Wanda Dudak.

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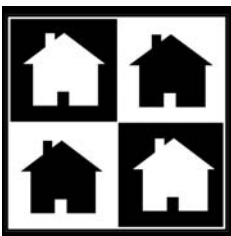
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To ensure, through re-
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 advocacy and enforcement ac-
 tivities, that all residents are
 guaranteed equal access to
 housing.



Newsletter Written By:
 Carrie Bender & Vance Novak
 Edited By: Hal Madorsky

Spotlight on The Board: Patricia S. Mearns



Patricia "Pat" Mearns, Vice President of The Housing Research & Advocacy Center Board of Directors, is the former Mayor of Shaker Heights, previous member of the Shaker Heights City Council, past Vice Mayor of the City of Shaker Heights and former Executive in Residence, The College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University.

Mrs. Mearns is active within the community and has many civic affiliations including: Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium of which she was the founding member; Cuyahoga County Mayors and Managers Association; Saint Luke's Foundation Board of Trustees; Cleveland State University Local Officials Leadership Academy; and the Fund for the Future of Shaker Heights Board of Trustees.

Pat was born in Brooklyn, New York. She and her husband Edward have nine children and twenty-nine grandchildren and spend much of their free time traveling to visit family.

The Board of Directors of The Housing Center Adds three New Directors

The Housing Research & Advocacy Center is pleased to announce the addition of three new board members to our board of Directors.

Patricia Burgess, Associate at Thompson Hine & Flory, served at the U.S. District Court under Judge Patricia Ann Gaughan during a Federal Judicial Externship.

Carole O. Heyward, was formerly the general counsel for The Housing Center and is now a professor at the Community Advocacy Clinic at Cleveland Marshall College of Law.

Sheryl King Benford, formerly the Shaker Heights law director under Mayor Patricia Mearns is General Counsel and Deputy General Manager for legal affairs for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority.

On Saturday May 8th, the Housing Center conducted a fair housing tester training for potential sales and rental testers that will be assisting the Housing Center with testing under our HUD Contract which started on March 1, and is an 18 month contract. The tester training was very well attended.

**THE HOUSING
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A New Era of Housing Justice

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