



Housing



Spring/Summer 2011

Center News

Housing Center & Ohio Civil Rights Commission Settle Federal Housing Discrimination Suit with Cleveland Developers, Architects

The Housing Research & Advocacy Center settled a housing discrimination lawsuit alleging disability discrimination by the designers and builders of a Cleveland apartment and condominium complex. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in 2009 by the Housing Center against the K & D Group and others responsible for designing and constructing the Stonebridge apartments and condominiums, located on the west bank of the Cuyahoga River in downtown Cleveland. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission joined the lawsuit, after finding probable cause that a number of the defendants had violated state accessibility laws.

Plaintiffs' experts found over 600 violations of federal and state accessibility requirements in the three Stonebridge residential buildings. The defendants denied violating federal and state law in the stipulated judgment approved by United States District Court Judge Dan Polster on June 9, 2011. However, they will make numerous alterations to the properties, including making all common areas and all 107 apartment units located in the Stonebridge Waterfront building accessible for people with disabilities. In addition, defendants will retrofit the common areas and 12 condominium units in the Stonebridge Plaza building to ensure compliance with the law. Defendants will also pay \$567,000 in damages, costs, and attorneys fees.

Among the inaccessible features that will be retrofitted are:

- interior and exterior doors that are too narrow to accommodate persons in wheelchairs;

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Housing Center Celebrates Fair Housing with Artist/Photographer Bernard J. Kleina

The Housing Research & Advocacy Center celebrated Fair Housing Month in April by hosting the 6th Annual Fair Housing Celebration. The reception featured renowned civil rights activist and photographer Bernard J. Kleina and his Chicago Freedom Movement Photography Exhibit. Guests were drawn in to the spectacular images profiling the civil rights open housing movement, known today as fair housing, initiated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Photos showed moving portraits of Dr. King, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, Reverend Ralph Abernathy, a young Jessie Jackson and others, as they marched and protested unfair housing practices in Chicago between 1965 and 1966. Mr. Kleina not only photographed the events, but took part as well. He spoke about his experiences, including his arrest, during the keynote address. He gave recent examples of discrimination uncovered during testing procedures by his organization, HOPE Fair Housing, Inc., and encouraged all in attendance to continue the fight to eliminate discrimination.

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Above, l-r, Chicago Freedom Movement Photography Exhibit; artist Bernie Kleina; Mike Brickner, Katie Brickner, Mary Ellen Gardner, Cynthia Ries, & HRAC Board member CARLETON MOORE!; captivated audience during the keynote address.

‘K&D Settlement’ continued from page 1

- clear floor space in bathrooms and kitchens that are inadequate for use by persons in wheelchairs;
- inaccessible routes leading to building entrances;
- light switches, outlets, and environmental controls that are out of reach for persons in wheelchairs; and
- inadequate handicapped parking.

Jeffrey D. Dillman, immediate former Executive Director of the Housing Center, stated, “Accessible housing is an essential means of ensuring that people with disabilities are able to fully participate in community life. This settlement sends a strong message that those who design and construct housing units cannot ignore their obligation to make them accessible to persons with disabilities.”

The Housing Center was represented in the case

by Diane Citrino, of Cleveland-based Thacker Martinsek, LPA and the Washington, D.C.-based civil rights law firm Relman, Dane & Colfax. The Ohio Civil Rights Commission was represented by Marilyn Tobocman, Principal Assistant Attorney General with the Ohio Attorney General’s Office. The Housing Center’s initial research and testing in this case was done under a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

According to 2008 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 182,022 individuals in Cuyahoga County with a disability, including 17,148 under the age of 18; 92,746 aged 18-64; and 72,128 aged 65 and over. These numbers are expected to increase as the population ages, wounded veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan and medical care allows people with disabilities to live longer and fuller lives.

‘Celebrate Fair Housing’ continued from page 1

The annual celebration also honored local fair housing activists. City of Cleveland Councilman, Anthony Brancatelli was honored for his advocacy efforts in bringing predatory lenders to justice in his Slavic Village neighborhood and providing assistance to victims of predatory lending. Charles See, Chairman of the Cleveland Fair Housing Board, Associate Director of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM) and Executive Director of LMM’s Community Re-entry Program, was recognized for his work protecting the housing rights of Cleveland residents. Housing Center Board Member Gay Quereau has been active in the civil rights movement since the 1960’s, where she participated in lunch counter demonstrations at Woolworth’s as a student. She has dedicated her career to ending discrimination and has served that purpose as a HRAC board member for the past 19 years.

The Housing Center Board and Staff also gave special recognition to its outgoing Executive Director, Jeffrey Dillman (see page 3). HRAC Board President Patricia Burgess presented all the honorees with a framed plaque featuring a Bernie Kleina photograph. The event included entertainment by acoustic guitarist Rick Iacoboni and fabulous raffle baskets.

The Housing Center would like to thank all of its sponsors: Presenting Sponsor, Thacker Martinsek; Champion Sponsors, Kondik Advertising and Third Federal Savings & Loan; Advocate Sponsor, Dollar Bank; Supporting Friend Sponsors, Fifth Third Bank, Anonymous, Councilman Anthony Brancatelli, and Dave & Ginnie Dawson; as well as all of the corporate contributors, event patrons and raffle item donors.



Above, Patricia Burgess with Councilman Anthony Brancatelli and with Charles See.



Above, Patricia Burgess with fellow board member Gay Quereau and with outgoing Executive Director Jeff Dillman.

Spotlight on HRAC

Housing Center Says Farewell to Executive Director Jeff Dillman

Housing Center Board of Directors:

Patricia Burgess, President
CARLETON MOORE!, Vice President
Harold Williams, Secretary
Kathy Kazol, Treasurer
Jan Cline
Claudia Coulton
Martha Goble
Linda Graves
Jacqueline Jackson
Gay Quereau
Isam Zaiem

Staff:

Hilary Mason King, Executive Director
Jeffrey Dillman, Consultant
Carrie Pleasants, Associate Director
Darlene English, Education & Outreach
Coordinator
Krissie Wells, Fair Housing Research
Associate
Zach Crafton, Test Coordinator
Denise Cooper, Development Director
Irving Graves, Office Assistant

Mission:

To promote fair housing and diverse communities, and to work to eliminate housing discrimination in Northeast Ohio by providing effective research, education and advocacy.



After six years, Jeffrey D. Dillman is leaving his position as Executive Director of the Housing Center. His spouse Frances Hasso, an academic, was offered a position at Duke University, taking the family to Durham, North Carolina. During his time with HRAC, the organization has been solidified as a credible, well-respected fair housing agency in the region. Jeff has worked to help stabilize the health of the agency to ensure its longevity, while enhancing the quality and widening the breadth of fair housing services intended to protect and celebrate diversity in Northeast Ohio.

Over the course of his six years, Jeff helped the agency obtain grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) totaling over \$1.9 million. He organized and hosted regular meetings for other non-profit fair housing groups, interested government officials from the County, including representatives from the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and HUD, in order to help foster and improve non-profit and civic relations locally. He also provided testimony at all levels of government concerning fair housing, predatory

lending practices, foreclosure issues, and payday lending, including testimony before the Federal Reserve Board in Atlanta and the Ohio Legislature. Jeff also has been instrumental in organizing and speaking at numerous conferences on housing discrimination, including those hosted by the Housing Center on accessibility issues and new strategies in fair housing.

Under Jeff's leadership, research initiatives were dramatically increased, with the institution of the annual "State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio" report, released each April to coincide with National Fair Housing Month, and a variety of other research reports on topics affecting housing choice, including racial disparities in mortgage lending, payday lending, occupancy codes, and others.

In addition to those major accomplishments, Jeff also secured foundation support to redesign the agency's website, conduct an agency strategic planning review, hire a part-time development director, conduct research into rental discrimination against deaf individuals, and provide additional education outreach to the mentally disabled population. Through his efforts, the agency staff has grown from three employees to seven, and the Board of Directors has expanded and become more active. Jeff has not only left an indelible mark on the fair housing community, but on the organization and specifically the staff. It is with great sadness that the Board and staff say farewell to Jeff and wish him and his family the best in their new endeavors in North Carolina.

Housing Center Selects Hilary Mason King as Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the Housing Center have selected Hilary Mason King as the organization's new Executive Director effective June 15, 2011. Ms. King's selection coincides with the organization's completion of a new strategic plan to help guide the agency over the next three and a half years.

King, a native of Northeast Ohio, joined the Housing Center as Fair Housing Specialist in 2010, having previously practiced law in New York City and worked as a Realtor with Howard Hanna Smythe Cramer in Cleveland. "The Board feels that the breadth of Ms. King's experience and expertise, as well as the skill and talents she brings, makes her the right person to lead the Housing Center," said Board President Patricia Burgess.

A lot has changed for the better since King grew up in Shaker Heights. King and her husband, Greg, chose to come home to Cleveland because of their love of the dynamic cultural life, mid-west sensibility and welcoming atmosphere. King is active in the community as a volunteer for several organizations including Christ Episcopal Church and the Mediation Association of Northeast Ohio, and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hospice of the Western Reserve.

King said, "I want to bring all of my experience and love of my hometown to contribute to the positive work our staff and the community are doing for the benefit of Northeast Ohio." The Housing Center's work complements that of many Cleveland-area organizations working together to solve problems in the region. Equal opportunity in housing will help provide the access to transportation, infrastructure, education, health care and food that make our region sustainable and desirable for new and existing residents and businesses.

Hilary earned her Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Michigan Law School, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Cornell University, College of Arts and Sciences. She is admitted to practice law in New York and Pennsylvania. In addition to representing clients as a real estate lawyer, she has also served as a mediator and is immediate past Vice President of the Mediation Association of Northeast Ohio.



Housing Center Welcomes New Staff

Zachary Crafton, formerly the Housing Center's Fair Housing Intern, has been hired as the Housing Center's Test Coordinator. He is responsible for the recruitment and screening of testers, as well as the coordination and execution of fair housing tests. He is also involved in several research projects, including the annual "State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio" report. Zach worked for Greater Ohio Policy Center in Columbus, as a Research Assistant before becoming the Research Director, where he was responsible for the strategic direction of the Research program. Zach earned his Master's Degree in geography from the University of Toronto, as well as a Bachelor of Science Degree in geography from Ohio University.



Zachary Crafton

The Housing Center also hired a summer intern, Mary Drummer. Mary is studying Urban Management at the Maxine Goodman Levine College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University. Recently, she was selected by NEW Leadership Ohio as one of twenty-four undergraduate women in Ohio with leadership potential, and was selected in 2010 as a New Leader by the Center for Progressive Leadership. Previously, Mary interned with the Center for Families and Children, Grace Place Catholic Worker Community in Cincinnati, and InterAct Cleveland.

Housing Center Releases Annual ‘State of Fair Housing’ Report

Although complaints of housing discrimination in Northeast Ohio decreased in 2010 from 2009, the number remained significantly higher than the average number of complaints filed in the last 21 years and represented the third highest yearly total since 1990, according to a new report issued by the Housing Center.

The report found that 186 complaints of housing discrimination were filed with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2010, compared to 226 in 2009 and a 21-year average of 128 complaints in Northeast Ohio. The Housing Center’s report also examined trends in discrimination complaints over the last ten years, finding a 72% increase in complaints filed from 2006-2010, when an average of 189 complaints were filed each year, compared to the previous five-year period, when the yearly average was 110. This increase was due to a 46% increase in the number of cases based on race (from 189 to 277) and a 38% increase in the number of cases based on disability (from 180 to 250).

“The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: April 2011,” report is the Housing Center’s sixth annual comprehensive survey of fair housing in Northeast Ohio, analyzing housing discrimination and segregation in a six-county region (Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, and Medina Counties). The other findings of the report include that:

- Although housing segregation decreased from 2000 to 2010, the Cleveland metropolitan area still ranks as the fifth most-segregated metropolitan area for African Americans.
- The number of cases brought based on familial status, national origin, sex/gender, and religion also increased from 2001-2005 to 2006-2010.
- The most common bases of discrimination alleged in complaints filed in 2005-2009 were race (29%), disability (26%), and familial status (22%).

The report recommends enacting stronger local fair housing laws, restoring Ohio’s fair housing law to make it equivalent to federal fair housing laws at all levels, strengthening the commitment of governments that receive federal funds to “affirmatively further fair housing,” adequately funding the new Consumer Financial Protection Agency, increasing monitoring and investigations of mortgage lenders, implementing comprehensive education efforts, ensuring that all online housing advertisements fully comply with fair housing laws, and providing government incentives and other creative solutions to combat housing discrimination and racial and economic segregation.

The research was supported by funding under a grant with the Cuyahoga County Department of Development. Visit www.thehousingcenter.org to read the full report.

Housing Center Awarded the US Department of Housing & Urban Development Three-Year Fair Housing Grant

The Housing Center was awarded a Private Enforcement Initiative – Performance Based Funding Component grant. The Housing Center will use this grant to provide services to all protected class members in Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Lorain Counties, focusing on reducing discrimination against persons with disabilities, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and families with children. To accomplish this, the Housing Center will perform a number of fair housing audits; conduct surveys of newly-constructed multi-family housing; conduct trainings for landlords, real estate professionals, condominium board members and transitional housing consumers about fair housing laws, conduct trainings for local government officials and others on accessibility requirements; assist potential victims of housing discrimination through intake, complaint investigation and assistance with filing complaints with administrative agencies; monitor housing advertisements for illegal statements; work with local governments to develop proposed visitability standards; and conduct a visitability training.

The Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI) offers a range of assistance to the nationwide network of fair housing groups. This initiative funds non-profit fair housing organizations to carry out testing and enforcement activities to prevent or eliminate discriminatory housing practices.

The grant, awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is part of \$40.8 million distributed to 108 fair housing organizations and non-profit agencies in 36 states and the District of Columbia to educate the public and to combat housing and lending discrimination.

**HOUSING
RESEARCH & ADVOCACY
CENTER**

A New Era of Housing Justice

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Spring/Summer 2011

Upcoming Events

**Fair Housing Law for
Real Estate Agents**
Thursday, August 25, 2011
9:00 AM—12:00 NOON
Keller Williams
Greater Cleveland Southeast
32875 Solon Road
Solon, OH 44139
3 Free CEU's available

Shaker Heights Landlord Training
Saturday, September 24, 2011
8:45 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.
Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Community Building
3450 Lee Road-Shaker Heights
Free of Charge—Six CEU credits
Light breakfast provided
lunch hour on own

****Save The Date****
Housing Research &
Advocacy Center's
7th Annual
Fair Housing Celebration
Thursday, April 12, 2012

The Housing Center conducts a number of fair housing trainings for landlords and realtors, as well as for individuals. We are also available to speak at various meetings. For information about any of our events, or to register, please contact the Housing Center's Education & Outreach Coordinator, Darlene English, at 216-361-9240.

Donations are a vital part of the Housing Center's operations, and any amount is welcome. To make a donation, please mail this tear-off form with a check made payable to the Housing Center to: 3631 Perkins Avenue, Ste. 3A-2, Cleveland, Ohio 44114. Donations can also be made on the Housing Center website, www.thehousingcenter.org or through Greater Cleveland Community Shares, www.communityshares.org. We want to stay in touch. Please update your contact information if necessary. Thank you.

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Organization: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
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