



Growth Continues in 30th Anniversary Year

The Housing Center, in its 30th year continues to grow and have a significant impact on Northeast Ohio. With a record number of grants received and the largest staff to date, the Housing Center is increasing its capacity to serve Northeast Ohio and the more than 30,000 individuals who experience housing discrimination annually.

As a result of the Fair Housing Hotline, new partnerships and increased education and outreach efforts, the Housing Center received over 87% more complaint allegations during the first half of 2013 than in the same period in 2012. The rise in complaints has necessitated a newly

created position of Enforcement Specialist (see page 4.)

The impact of the Housing Center's advocacy work has never been more evident. Over the past 13 years, the Housing Center's advocacy efforts in discrimination cases have involved a total of 289 properties. Through those cases, our fair housing work has made 1,690 units more available to individuals and families in Northeast Ohio! With the support of generous contributions to the 30 for 30 campaign, we will be able to continue to meet the demands for fair housing services, enforcement, education and advocacy.

Recently Released: Geauga Factbook

The Housing Center recently published the Geauga County Rental Factbook, which provides basic information on rental patterns in Geauga County. The Rental Factbook discusses affordable housing in each city, village, and township. For example, in South Russell, a small affluent village where the median household income is \$92,969, almost 96% of its residents are homeowners. South Russell Village's very high-income population and limited number of renters signals a lack of affordable housing for low-income, or even middle-income, residents. Indeed, the median rental cost in South Russell Village is \$1,804 a month, one of the highest median rent costs in the region.

Housing Center Partners with Environmental Health Watch to Further Sustainability and Fair Housing

The Housing Center and Environmental Health Watch (EHW) received a grant from the McGregor Foundation to work collaboratively on the Healthy, Accessible Housing for Seniors to Promote Aging-in-Place project. The program will focus on educating consumers about universal accessibility to allow senior and disabled populations to safely remain in their homes. Cleveland's housing stock consists primarily of older homes. As the population ages and many veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan with disabilities, accessibility becomes more important. The project will consist

of educational workshops to assist homeowners with creating healthy home environments. Information will also be conveyed to caregivers, who may assist and advocate for behavioral and structural changes in the home. Through the project, EHW and the Housing Center will also make home visits to assess reasonable accommodation and modification requests for people with mobility challenges.

Environmental hazards such as lead, mold, pests/pesticides, etc. pose special risks for vulnerable seniors whose chronic health conditions may be exacerbated by such threats.

The Healthy, Accessible Housing for Seniors to Promote Aging in Place program is made possible through a generous grant from the McGregor Foundation and aims to improve the lives of approximately 400 people.

Environmental Health Watch, an environmental justice agency, has worked to address and improve health concerns related to the urban industrial environment since 1980.

For more information on how to help seniors age in place, contact the Housing Center, Environmental Health Watch or Services for Independent Living.

HUD Clarifies LGBT Equal Access to Housing Programs

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offered clarification on its policy to ensure its programs are open to all eligible individuals regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. The regulations require equal access provisions in housing funded by HUD and housing that holds a mortgage insured by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). In other words, owners and operators of HUD-funded housing or **housing insured by FHA** are prohibited from asking about an applicant's sexual orientation, gender identity,

or marital status for the purpose of determining eligibility or otherwise making the housing available.

A private housing provider receiving an FHA mortgage loan and wanting to rent out that property, would be prohibited from discriminating or inquiring about a potential renter's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Currently, federal fair housing law does not include sexual orientation in the list of protected classes, although some states and municipalities do. But this policy is the starting point for sexual orientation protection to expand.

After the recent Supreme Court decision to rule the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional, many more states are recognizing same-sex partnerships. The HUD LGBT Equal Access policy also clarified the definition of "family" to be explicitly inclusive of LGBT households.

For a listing of municipalities that protect LGBT, download the Housing Center's *Annual State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: April 2013* from the Housing Center's website.

HUD Releases Proposed New Requirements for Municipalities to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development recently issued a proposed new regulation for affirmatively furthering the purposes and policies of the Fair Housing Act. Municipalities receiving federal funds such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds are required to promote fair housing, which now includes conducting an analysis of impediments (AI) study and certifying that they are affirmatively furthering fair housing. But the current model leaves a lot to be desired in actual practice.

The new proposal recognizes more steps are necessary to proactively overcome historic patterns of segregation as mandated by the Fair Housing Act. HUD would refine the existing requirements with a fair housing assessment model (replacing the AI). In addition, HUD would provide municipalities with data on patterns of integration & segregation, racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, access to education, employment, transportation, and environmental health, as well as disproportionate housing needs based on protected classes, and data on individuals with disabilities and families with children. Cities would then assess their needs and prioritize

areas of improvement to achieve more meaningful outcomes to further fair housing. The proposed rule is intended to improve fair housing planning by more directly linking it to the community development planning process.

In its ongoing effort to preserve the integrity and transparency of the process, HUD is accepting public comments regarding the proposed regulation through www.regulations.gov until September 17, 2013.



Zimmerman Case Shows Fair Housing is Still the Issue

The civil rights struggle today is just as important as it was 58 years ago, when a 14 year old African American boy, Emmett Till was brutally murdered for whistling at a white woman in the south. Till was from Chicago and bragged to his cousins, whom he was visiting in Mississippi, about the white girlfriend he had back home. He asked a 21 year old white female store clerk out on a date and whistled at her on a dare. Shortly thereafter, he was abducted from his uncle's house, beaten, shot in the head and found in the Tallahatchie River with a cotton-gin fan tied around his neck. The all-white jury found the murders, including the store clerk's husband, not guilty. One of the accused murders was quoted as saying, "Well, what else could we do?...I like niggers—in their place.....They ain't gonna go to school with my kids....and I just made up my mind. 'Chicago boy,' I said, 'I'm tired of 'em sending your kind down here to stir up trouble....I'm going to make an example of you—just so everybody can know how me and my folks stand.'"

The murder of Emmett Till was a catalyst for the civil rights movement, an effort for racial equality and justice. Dr. Martin Luther King cited the Emmett Till murder as an example of "the evil of racial injustice." Recently, in a predominantly white suburb of Miami, Florida, George Zimmerman was found not guilty by reason of self-defense of the murder of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African American teen walking home from the store. Zimmerman said Martin looked "suspicious." As a self-appointed neighborhood watchman in the gated community, Zimmerman took it upon himself to follow, chase and gun down Martin, wrongly believing he didn't belong there.

Despite Fair Housing Laws aimed at ending residential discrimination and promoting racial integration, the United States continues to be racially segregated. In a 2011 report using 2010 census data, "The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis," Miami, Florida was ranked the 7th most segregated major metropolis. Cleveland followed, ranking 8th. (Logan & Stults, 2011) Was segregation the dark shadow behind the Emmett Till

and Trayvon Martin murders? In the Columbia University study, "How Desegregation Changed Us: The Effects of Racially Mixed Schools on Students and Society," researchers found that when white and black students were integrated in schools, "white graduates said that they had gained a greater appreciation for other cultures in high school and were less likely to revert to stereotypical assumptions about others based on race. They also stressed their decreased fear of people of color." It continues to find that as the minority students of desegregated schools grow up and look for places to live, "they find themselves in a housing market with limited choices of diverse and stable communities." (Wells et. others, 2005) According to the Housing Center's report, "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in 2011 Ohio Mortgage Lending," housing discrimination against minorities continues, with African Americans, Latinos and Asians given fewer home lending options and receiving more high-cost mortgage loans.

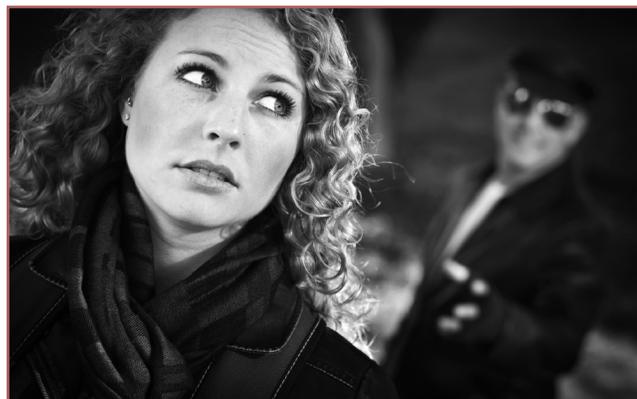
For 45 years, fair housing advocates have touted the benefits of integrated communities, including greater racial tolerance, increased cultural sensitivity and less racial bias. Fair housing doesn't only benefit those who are protected from discrimination. It can propel society to a more unified state. If George Zimmerman understood Trayvon Martin had as much right to be in that gated community as he did, Trayvon might still be alive today, and entering his senior year of high school. If the accused murderers in the Emmett Till case had the opportunity of racial integration, perhaps they would have dismissed a black boy whistling at a white woman as youthful bravado.

Where we live affects our access to jobs, education, healthcare and transportation. When we are denied the chance to live, work, and play together, we create an environment where suspicions and racial stereotypes breed more ignorance and hate. Greater enforcement of fair housing laws will support more culturally sensitive and racially tolerant communities. Again, we have an opportunity to move forward as a country toward a more just society. Fair housing is still the issue.

Did you know....?

Sexual harassment by a landlord or property manager towards a tenant is considered a violation of the Fair Housing Act. There are several types of sexual harassment cases that might occur in a landlord-tenant situation, all of which are illegal.

- "This for that," in which a landlord seeks or requires sexual favors in return for reduced or free rent, necessary repairs, or under the threat of eviction.
- A hostile housing environment, in which the landlord makes unwanted sexual advances towards a tenant.



Nationwide Study Finds Persistent Discrimination

Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012, a recent national study on racial and ethnic housing discrimination, finds that unequal treatment persists. This study is the fourth in a series conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Urban Institute, and demonstrates that there is still much work to do to eliminate discrimination and promote racial integration. The Urban Institute concluded while blatant acts of housing discrimination against minorities has declined, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are offered fewer housing options than equally qualified whites.

The Urban Institute conducted the study in 28 metropolitan areas including Cleveland with the help of the Housing Center, by using a paired testing methodology in which pairs of trained individuals (one white and the other pair either African American, Hispanic or Asian) are matched on gender, age, family composition and financial characteristics. The pairs then contacted housing providers to inquire about available units through a random selection process of all advertised units, and recorded their treatment. The Urban Institute utilized over 8,000 paired tests in the sales and rental markets to measure the incidence and forms of discrimination experienced by black, Hispanic, and Asian renters and homebuyers.

Minority homeseekers who are as equally qualified as white homeseekers are often offered fewer homebuying options. Further, the report finds that when there is a difference in treatment, white homeseekers are more likely to be favored than minorities. In addition, African American homebuyers are slightly more likely to be denied an in-person appointment. One example, which was a common scenario was one in which a black tester on a sales test was told she must be prequalified in order to see homes, whereas the white tester was not asked about prequalification and was able to schedule an appointment to see available homes.

Steering was also observed in some of the tests. One sales test revealed what a real estate agent told a white tester, "I'm not prejudiced but I wouldn't recommend living in South Albuquerque...too many Hispanics. The further south you go the more you run into."

Historically, fair housing has focused on discrimination against African Americans, but it's clear that the scope must be broadened, especially in light of the recent immigration issues. The study concludes that more subtle means of discrimination are being applied to minorities who are seek housing, and the fight for fair housing is not only still relevant, but imperative.

Housing Center Thanks You!

The Housing Center's enforcement initiatives would not be possible if not for the dedicated individuals who serve as testers. Earlier this summer, a tester appreciation was held, where the civil rights advocates were honored with certificates for their service and gift bags. Their work conducting audits in the rental, sales, lending and accessibility markets open doors for all to access the housing of their choice.



Housing Research & Advocacy Center

2728 Euclid Avenue, Suite 200
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
Phone: (216) 361-9240
Fax: (216) 426-1290
www.thehousingcenter.org

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Tori Guy, Fair Housing Intern
Khalid Ali, Fair Housing Intern

Mission:

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

Values:

Equality, Respect, Honesty, Attention, Acceptance, Commitment, Dedication, Knowledge and Understanding

Housing Center Staff Grows to Meet Needs

The Housing Center welcomed **Raymond Cole** to the newly created position of Enforcement Specialist. Previously, Raymond was a Community Organizer with Empowering and Strengthening Ohio's People. He will assist the Fair Housing Investigator with enforcement and advocacy activities including fielding complaints, monitoring for discriminatory advertising and assisting with research for advocacy and reporting. Raymond earned a Master of Arts degree in Community Psychology and Social Change from Pennsylvania State University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Malone University.

The Housing Center also welcomed **Khalid Ali**, in July as the research intern. Khalid is currently pursuing his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Urban Studies with a concentration in Public Management from Cleveland State University's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs. Prior to joining the Housing Center, Khalid served as Program Coordinator at Lakeland Community College, where he headed a program geared toward the retention and graduation efforts of African-American male students. During the 2012 Presidential Election, Khalid operated as a



Field Organizer in the city of Cleveland. Focused on increasing civic and political participation in minority communities, Khalid led various community outreach events and voter registration drives.

Doris Honsa will serve in a different capacity in the newly created Community Engagement Specialist position. She will present fair housing information to community groups, attend community meetings and assist with the Speakers Bureau. Doris has been the Housing Center's Program Assistant since 2011.

Housing Center Volunteer

The Housing Center welcomed volunteer extern Brian Friedt this summer to assist with education and outreach initiatives. Brian contacted the Housing Center for volunteer opportunities as part of his participation in Cleveland State University's Center for Educational Leadership. A condition of the program is that participants must extern with a nonprofit organization. Brian selected the Housing Center because he recognized that many parents of his students could benefit from the services

the Housing Center provides. It is his goal to foster community partnerships with schools that are losing resources. Brian earned a Doctorate of Philosophy degree in Special Education from Kent State University, a Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Cleveland State, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Bowling Green State University. He works as an Intervention Specialist for Cuyahoga County.



Housing Center Extern, Brian Friedt (left) with Cleveland's Mayor Frank Jackson (middle) and Housing Center intern Tori Guy (right)



2728 Euclid Avenue, Suite 200
 Cleveland, Ohio 44115
 Phone: (216) 361-9240
 Fax: (216) 426-1290
 Fair Housing Hotline: (216) 361-9861
www.thehousingcenter.org

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FAIR HOUSING EVENTS

<p>Fair Housing & Landlord Tenant Law</p> <p>Wednesday, September 25, 2013 6:00–8:30 pm Notre Dame College Performing Arts Center 4545 College Road South Euclid, OH 44121 1 free CEU available for real estate professionals</p>	<p>Helping Clients Access HUD Assisted Housing:</p> <p>Friday, October 4, 2013 1:00–5:00 pm North Star Reentry Resource Center 1834 East 55th Street Cleveland, OH 44103 3 free CEUs available for social work professionals</p>	<p>Fair Housing & Landlord Tenant Law</p> <p>Tuesday, October 29, 2013 5:30–7:30 pm Parma City Hall Road Parma, OH 44129 1 free CEU available for real estate professionals</p>
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Register online at www.hermescleveland.com

Show your support for fair housing and diverse communities in Northeast Ohio by participating in the Housing Center 5K!

