

Service Animal Case Impact

The Fair Housing Act was enacted in 1968. Yet forty-six years later discrimination abounds, whether because of someone's race, nationality, religion, family status, sex, or disability. People continue to face obstacles to accessing the housing of their choice. To combat this discrimination, the Housing Center routinely conducts investigative testing to identify and eliminate unfair practices.

Recently, testing revealed that owners of a national management company were unfairly applying breed, weight, and species restrictions within their pet policy to animals serving the needs of individuals with disabilities. Under federal and state fair housing laws, housing providers must make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to allow them the equal

opportunity to use and enjoy their dwelling. Fair housing laws, unlike the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), do not require that animals be a certain species, or have papers certifying the animal as a service animal. Federal guidance prohibits housing providers from applying breed, size, or weight limits to a service or support animal in service to an individual with a disability.

The housing provider in this instance made unlawful requests for proof that the service animal was trained and denied a specific dog as a service animal based upon the pet policy's breed restrictions. In addition, the rental application inquired about familial status including the names, ages, and dates of birth for children (protected class characteristics)—information state law prohibits housing providers from

collecting.

The Housing Center filed a charge of housing discrimination and negotiated a settlement requiring the housing provider to develop a national service/support animal policy waiving breed, weight, and species restrictions; waiving any fees/deposits associated with the animal; and agreeing not to require any proof of training. Further, all staff will be trained on the new policy, and local staff will be required to attend a fair housing training. The company's Ohio rental application will be revised to discontinue the collection of information on minors in the household. As this housing provider manages over 15,000 units in 14 states, this settlement will have a significant impact on ensuring equal access to housing regardless of family status or disability.

Ohio State Bar Foundation Grant

The Housing Center is excited to further promote fair housing and fair lending practices through a grant from the Ohio State Bar Foundation. The generous grant provides for several workshops for the older adult population to educate them on their fair housing rights and make them aware of the predatory lending practices that often target this group. In addition, the project includes a consumer brochure on fair lending and an informational video.

Senior populations are often

a target of financial scams and discriminatory actions with regard to mortgage loans and refinancing options. Recently, there has been a rise in reverse mortgages, a type of loan that allows homeowners to borrow against the equity in their homes and receive payments from the lender. It can be problematic when many seniors do not understand the terms and conditions because some lenders keep them uninformed about their rights and responsibilities. This financial exploitation leaves seniors with devastating losses to



their net worth as well as shame and embarrassment.

The Housing Center, through the Ohio State Bar Foundation grant, aims to ensure that older adults and their advocates understand their fair housing rights, are able to identify violations, and can easily obtain the proper support to protect their right to access or maintain the housing of their choice.

Brush Strokes for Equality Panelists Inspire

The Housing Center's 2014 Fair Housing Celebration, Brush Strokes for Equality, opened with a dedication ceremony to celebrate the installation of the Housing Center's public mural, "It is Above that You and I shall Go," created by Katherine Chilcote, Founding Artistic Director, Building Bridges Arts Collaborative and 12 youth artists. The mural is located at Six Chimneys Apartments (3907 Prospect Avenue) operated by the HELP Foundation, Inc. During the ribbon cutting, Executive Director Hilary King welcomed friends of the Housing Center and thanked generous sponsors and partners. She shared the importance of partnerships and the arts to fulfilling the Housing Center's mission and emphasized that fair housing is still the issue.

Following the dedication, guests

gathered for a reception at Trinity Commons featuring a lively community conversation about fair housing issues moderated by The Honorable Peter Lawson Jones. The community conversation included lead artist Katherine Chilcote, youth artist Shyaira Thomas, Shani Meeks (Friend of the Housing Center), Mike Pistorino (motivational speaker, C&M Consulting), Daniel J. Rice (CEO/President, the HELP Foundation, Inc.), and Julia Shearson (Executive Director, CAIR Ohio, Cleveland Chapter).

Panelists advocated for broadening education throughout the community to ensure that individuals know about housing discrimination and are aware of their fair housing rights. They stressed that it is important to recognize blatant incidents of



discrimination involving race and color in outreach efforts as well as the more subtle cases involving familial status, religion, and disabilities. Several audience members joined in the conversation, commenting on the need to respect differences and asking panelists for suggestions on ways to help build more welcoming neighborhoods. Each panelist shared their personal experiences dealing with prejudice and discrimination and provided insight into the importance of the fair housing laws in protecting peoples' rights to access the housing of their choice.

State Of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: April 2014

The Housing Center recently released the ninth edition of The State 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 report found a 9.6% increase in the number of fair housing complaints filed in the region in the last 5 years (2009-2013) compared to the previous 5-year period (2004-2008). The most common bases of discrimination alleged in complaints included race, familial status, and handicap/disability. Complaints filed on the basis of familial status (families with children under 18) increased by 192% between the 5-year periods and made up 31% of the complaints filed between 2009 and 2013.

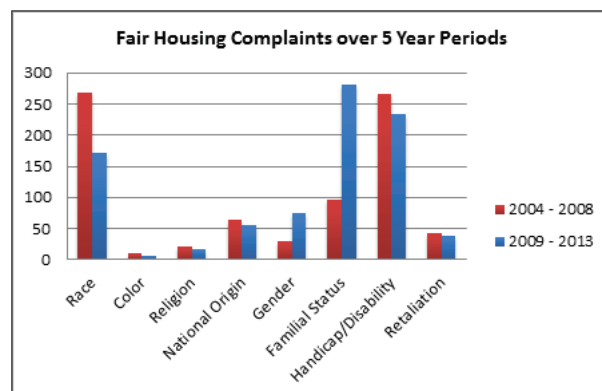
The region remains one of the

most racially segregated regions in the United States. Race made up 19.5% of the housing discrimination complaints between 2009 and 2013. The Housing Center estimates that there are at least 33,960 instances of housing discrimination annually in the region in the rental and sales markets against African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The majority of cases are never reported to a government agency.

Complaints filed based on discrimination against individuals with a handicap/disability remained high for the period of 2009 to 2013. Additionally, because the majority of housing in the region was constructed before 1980, there is a lack of

accessible housing for people with mobility disabilities.

The report also includes an overview of the 135 municipal fair housing ordinances enacted throughout the region. The full report of The State of Fair Housing in Northeast Ohio: April 2014 is available on the Housing Center's website, www.thehousingcenter.org, see publications.



Opening Doors Through the Art of Storytelling-One Activist's Story

Last year, the Housing Center collected a number of personal stories from individuals about their experiences with housing discrimination. Each person's perspective is different, but each one is empowering in its description of the emotional impact of fair housing. This is one of the stories:

My husband George served this country in the United States Army and was honorably discharged. Then he worked for LTV Steel until he suffered a stroke in 1982. I retired from the Navy Finance Center after 24 years. We always worked hard, but we didn't set out to become activists—activism chose us.

When we heard about a new luxury apartment complex that offered all first-floor living, we thought we'd found the ideal living situation.

George has been disabled since 1982,

and received a total hip replacement, so he was no longer able to move around the Cleveland Heights home we lived in for 33 years. The new apartment offered an attached garage, an in-suite laundry room and patio. I called to inquire and was told it was wheelchair accessible. I immediately sent my deposit, and we prepared to move.

When I first discovered an elevated threshold entrance to the patio, the property manager assured me it would be taken care of, as well as a ramp to be installed and a curb cut. After several months of empty promises, I began making some phone calls. I spoke to my Warrensville Heights Councilwoman Ruby Nelson and to the Housing Center, and learned that our right to accessible housing had been violated.

Once the owners of the complex realized how serious I was, they made me an offer—one that I could refuse. They offered to make whatever modifications they needed

to our unit only. I knew about other disabled tenants who needed the same accommodations as my husband, so I decided to fight for the rights of all of the tenants.

At the time, I didn't realize that I would be a force for change—change that benefitted everyone in the complex and not just us. In the end, the complex was required to retrofit the entire complex to make it truly accessible.

The Storytelling project was supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.



Hoarding & Fair Housing

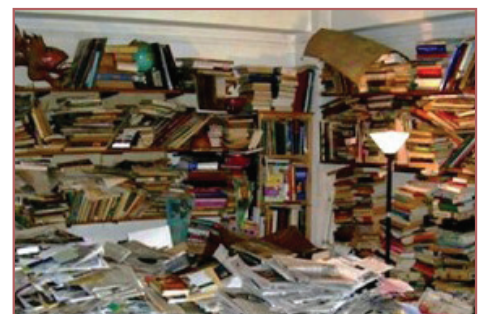
What is hoarding? Hoarding is the acquisition of possessions that seem to have little or no value in mass amounts or the failure to discard such items to the point of interfering with daily activities.

There are conflicting theories about the nature of hoarding as a disability. The International Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Foundation identifies hoarding as a type of OCD, reporting 1 in 50 people suffer from the affliction. But, psychologist David Tolin reports to webmd.com that more recent studies have found that the frontal lobe (the part of the brain that weighs options or thinks rationally) works differently in the brain of a hoarder than non-hoarders. Hoarding, argues Dr.

Tolin, is a problem similar to major depression disorders, anxiety or attention deficit disorder. Though the specific category to which hoarding belongs is debatable, there is consensus that hoarding does have a relationship with disability.

While Fair Housing Law does protect individuals on the basis of disability, it does not protect individuals who pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or cause substantial physical damage to a property. Last month, authorities suspected hoarding as the cause of death of a 66-year old Connecticut woman who was found buried under a pile of debris in her basement after her first floor collapsed under the weight of clutter.

A number of organizations



have partnered to form Hoarding Connection of Cuyahoga County to serve as a resource for the community. Their website, www.hoardingconnectioncc.org provides information to first responders and service providers to educate them on signs of hoarding and best practices for the treatment and management of hoarding. If a hoarder is faced with housing discrimination, they should contact the Housing Center to discuss their options.

THIRD ANNUAL

ROCK the BLOCK™

Housing Center 5K Run / 1 Mile Walk
Saturday, September 27, 2014
 Edgewater Park

food & entertainment by the lake

t-shirts & goodie bags

awards & prizes

family fun

The Housing Center (www.thehousingcenter.org) invites you to join us for our 3rd Annual ROCK THE BLOCK 5K Run & 1 Mile Walk (the course is accessible for wheelchairs) to stand up against housing discrimination. All proceeds benefit the Housing Center's fair housing research, education, and advocacy activities to eliminate housing discrimination and promote diverse communities throughout Northeast Ohio!

RACE SCHEDULE

- 8:00am** — Check-In and Race Day Registration @ Edgewater Lower Pavilion
- 9:00am** — 5K Run
- 9:05am** — 1 Mile Walk

ENTRY FEES

	Pre-Registration	Race Day
Adults	\$20	\$25
Children (10 & Under)	\$10	\$15
Students (Elem—College)	\$15	\$20
Family of Four	\$50	\$65
Team of Six	\$100	\$125

GIVE-AWAYS

Refreshments for all participants. T-shirts and goodie bags provided to pre-registered participants (and to race-day registrants if supplies are available). *We will do our best to meet t-shirt size requests.*

5K AWARDS

AWARDS & PRIZES presented to Overall Male & Female. AWARDS for Top Three Male and Female Finishers in the following Age Groups: 14 & under; 15-19; 20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-64; 65 & over.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!



Hermes Cleveland: (216) 623-9933



ROCK THE BLOCK REGISTRATION

Two ways to register: **1. ONLINE** securely at www.hermescleveland.com. Online registration closes Friday, Sept. 26 at 9am.

2. MAIL your completed entry form with a check payable to "Hermes Sports & Events," 1624 St. Clair Ave, Cleveland, OH 44114. Mailed entries must be received by Wed, Sept. 24. **Please complete one form per person.** Walk-up registrations accepted race day.

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____ Age on Race Day: _____ Gender: M F
Month/Day/Year

I am participating in (Check One): 1 Mile Walk 5K Run T-Shirt Size (Circle One): S M L XL XXL

I am registering as (Check One): Adult Child Student (School: _____) Family of Four

Member of a Team (Team Name: _____) Families & Teams, please send all registration forms and payment together.

Waiver must be read and signed before entry is accepted: By signing below, I attest that I am fully aware that participating in a road race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter & run/walk unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decisions of a race official relative to safely completing the course. I assume all risks associated in participating in this event including, but not limited to, falls, contact with participants, the effects of the weather, traffic, and the conditions of the road, all such risks being known and approved by me. Having read this waiver, and knowing these facts, and in consideration of you accepting my entry, I for myself and anyone entitled to act in my behalf, waive and release the Housing Research & Advocacy Center, Hermes Sports & Events, the Cleveland Metroparks, all other sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims of liability of any kind arising out of my participation in this event. I hereby grant full permission to any or all of the foregoing to use any photographs, video tapes, motion pictures, recordings, and/or other record of this event for any legitimate purpose. All race entries are non-refundable. The Housing Center and Hermes Sports & Events reserve the right to reject entries.

Signature (Parent/Guardian must sign if you are under 18): _____ Date: _____

It is Above that You and I shall Go

“It is Above that You and I shall Go” arose out of a visioning workshop led by Darlene English, Director of Education & Outreach; Mandy Mehlman, Senior Research Associate of the Housing Center; and Katherine Chilcote, Founding Artistic Director, Building Bridges Arts Collaborative. During the session, residents of HELP Foundation’s Six Chimneys apartment complex, staff of the Housing Center, local neighbors, students from St. Clair Superior’s MYCOM program, and the youth of Building Bridges joined together to envision a unified and more equitable neighborhood.

The visioning workshop included a fair housing presentation and a talk, given by Katherine Chilcote, about placemaking in a neighborhood and the mural design process. Afterwards, participants engaged in small group discussions about the neighborhood where the mural would be placed, and what, if anything, it needed to feel wholly like a community. Groups mentioned the importance of gathering spaces to meet friends or to reflect on a day’s activities. They also talked about the vibrancy of the location with nearby daycares, schools and universities, businesses, nonprofits, and community gardens. Through this conversation, the concept for the mural was born.

The mural is intended to encourage viewers to reexamine

ideals of the concept of community and to open ourselves to the benefits of diverse neighborhoods. Through this vibrant piece of public art, we hope consumers currently experiencing housing discrimination will gain a better understanding of the laws and be more willing to come forward to protect and advocate for their fair housing rights.

“It is Above that You and I shall Go” is dedicated to Diane Citrino, Esq. of Thacker Martinsek, LPA, for her generous contributions to the work of the Housing Center to eliminate housing discrimination.

The design of the mural was led by artist Katherine Chilcote, and her apprentices: Shyaira Thomas (Lead Intern), Malik Benjamin, James Cooper, Zoey Everett, Lishaun Gathright, Jamal Gibson, Crystin King, Lauren King, Shamara Nichouls, Damian Perkins, Sidney Thompson, and Erykah Townsend.

The project and event were sponsored by Cuyahoga Arts & Culture; Kondik Advertising & Printing; Ohio Savings Bank, a Division of New York Community Bank; Thacker Martinsek, LPA; Dollar Bank; The National Fair Housing Alliance; and individual donors.

Photographs of the visioning workshop, design process, mural dedication and Fair Housing Celebration were generously donated by photographer James Pleasants.



Mural Dedication, Continued



Housing Center Board President, CARLETON MOORE!



Julia Shearson, CARLETON MOORE!, Isam Zaiem, Hilary King



Katherine Chilcote and youth artists



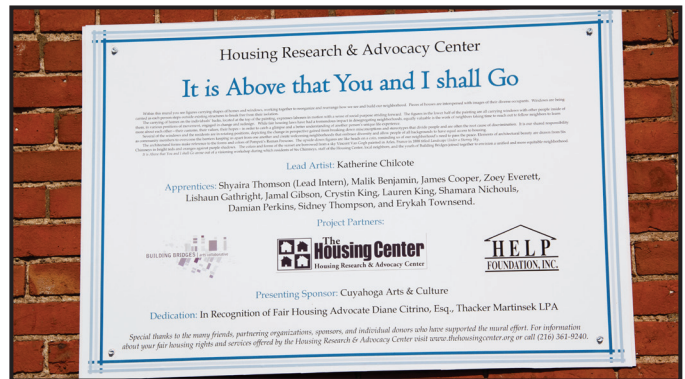
Dr. Reverend Crystal Walker, Deborah Goode and guest



Crowd gathered to watch ribbon cutting & mural dedication



Mural: It is Above that You and I shall Go



Mural plaque dedicated to Fair Housing Advocate Diane Citrino

Housing Research & Advocacy Center

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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

In Memorium:

Patricia Burgess

Board Member Patricia Burgess was a civic activist of the best sort. Her fierce advocacy, particularly as Board President, led the Housing Center for over a decade.

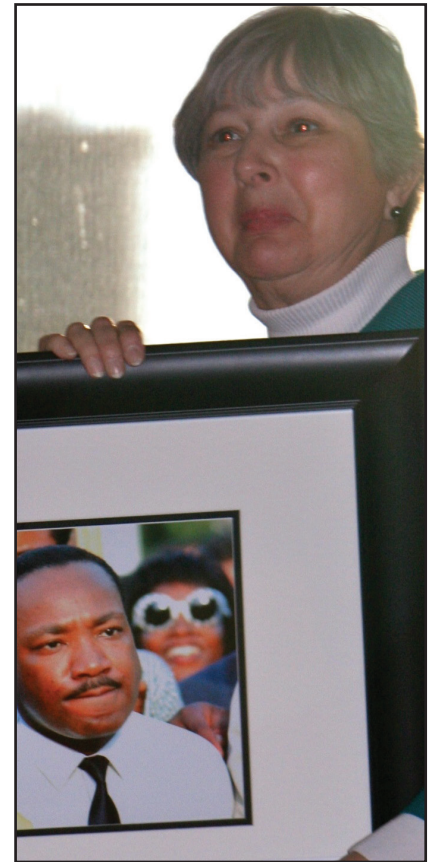
In addition to her work with the Housing Center, Patricia was also heavily involved with her church Christ Episcopal in Shaker Heights, the League of Women Voters of Shaker Heights, and Family Promise of Greater Cleveland, among others.

Patricia grew up in Massillon, Ohio, and as she explained in her story for Opening Doors through the Art of Storytelling, the lack of diversity in her hometown was the inspiration for her to pursue a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning. She noted that "geography could shape opportunity." She continued her studies, earning her Ph.D. and combining two of her passions: history and urban planning. Ultimately, her doctoral thesis was turned into a book, Planning for the Private Interest, published by The Ohio State University Press. After earning her Juris Doctorate from Case Western Reserve University, she practiced law at Thompson Hine LLP.

We have all been inspired by her passion and commitment to protecting fair housing rights and ensuring equal housing opportunities. Patricia's thoughtful guidance, compassion, generosity, and steadfast leadership have provided a firm foundation for the Housing Center's work to expand housing choice. Her professional, and more importantly personal, contributions to the lives of all of us at the Housing Center and the greater community she influenced, will be deeply missed.



The Housing Center is profoundly grateful to each individual who made a generous donation in honor of Patricia Burgess.





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FAIR HOUSING EVENTS

Fair Housing and Landlord Tenant Law

Wednesday, August 20, 2014
6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Newburgh Heights Village Hall
4000 Washington Park Boulevard
Newburgh Heights, OH 44105

Fair Housing Law for Real Estate Professionals

Thursday, October 16, 2014
9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Solon City Hall
34200 Bainbridge Road
Solon, OH 44139

Visitability Summit
**The Northeast Ohio
Fair Housing Collaborative**
Thursday, October 30, 2014
12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.
Stephanie Tubbs Jones
Community Center
3450 Lee Road
Shaker Heights, OH 44120

THIRD ANNUAL
ROCK the BLOCK
Housing Center 5K Run / 1 Mile Walk
Saturday, September 27, 2014
Edgewater Park

All proceeds benefit the Housing Research & Advocacy Center's fair housing research, education, and advocacy activities to eliminate housing discrimination and promote inclusive communities. Visit us at www.thehousingcenter.org.

