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Until difference no longer makes a difference....



Want to receive this newsletter by e-mail? Send a message to hri@housingrihts.com with 'subscribe' in the subject line!!

Stomp Out Discrimination

Join us in "stomping" out discrimination until difference no longer makes a difference in a world where every child is smiling....

- Free from hunger
- Free from harm
- Free from homelessness
- Free from hate

Housing Rights, Inc. was founded in 1979 by a law student who could not find housing because she had young children. We are committed to seeing that that does not happen to others. Join us in fighting to uphold the 'housing rights' of everyone.

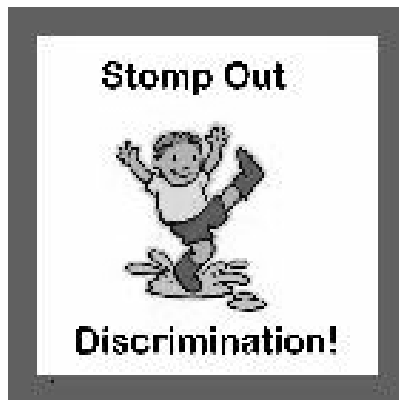
Our Goals with your help, are to eliminate discrimination in housing, prevent evictions/foreclosures and encourage diversity in our communities. We do this by assisting tenants and landlord, homeowners and housing providers to understand their rights and responsibilities and resolve problems, so that EVERYONE will have a real opportunity to live in decent, affordable housing wherever it may be located.

Your support will make it possible to keep our housing rights counseling services free to all who call...renters, homeowners, landlords and others for ANOTHER 25 YEARS!

Donations of time money and goods are welcome. If you want to combine your passion for recycling with support of Housing Rights, Inc. bring us your used printer cartridges! HRI is recycling cartridges. (We receive a fee for each cartridge!)

We are also collecting BART cards. BART will pay us the leftover amount on the cards. Each .05 or .10 adds up!

Visit our website to learn more about how to donate to Housing Rights, Inc.: www.housingrights.org



Housing Rights, Inc.

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Until difference no longer makes a difference....

Different Times

Spotlight On: HRI's Lawyer Referral Service

It is the goal of the Housing Rights Lawyer Referral Service (#120) to provide free and low cost legal services to low and lower income households who would not otherwise have access to quality legal representation, taking into consideration the economic needs of the client, so that no one is

denied services due to inability to pay.

We were certified by the California State Bar in August of 2004. We now have 19 attorneys signed up! The types of cases they accept include substandard living conditions, predatory lending, real estate fraud, personal injury and housing discrimination.

Attorneys who would like to join our Service should call 1510-548-8776 and speak to Arlene Bradley.

In addition to matching low and lower income individuals and households with skilled and expert attorneys we also provide a notary service in our Berkeley office (call 1510-548-8776 for an appointment).

We also sponsor training for attorneys. On April 28th, 2006 Michelle Magar of Magar and Milstein will conduct a workshop called: Disability Rights, Reasonable Accommodation and the Practice of Law. Three MCLE credits will be awarded. Call us for more information.

To date four cases have been successfully settled. We have processed over 50 potential referrals.

Low and lower income individuals who are having housing problems and think they might need a lawyer should call us at: 1800-261-2298.



April Is Fair Housing Month

The Fair Housing Act was signed on April 11, 1968, just one week after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This landmark bill, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, resulted from the hard work and leadership of Dr. King and others in the civil rights movement and was an important step toward confronting discrimination against minorities in housing. Throughout the early 1960's civil rights activists around

the country petitioned Congress for a comprehensive fair housing law. However, it wasn't until 1966, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led marches throughout the City of Chicago, that fair

and open housing became a national topic.

The enactment of the Federal Fair Housing Act came only after a long and difficult journey. From 1966-1967, Congress regularly considered the fair housing bill, but failed to garner a strong enough majority for its passage. However, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, President Lyndon Johnson



Joshua Fasold, 5th Grade Valleyview Elementary, 2005

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"We are for difference:

For respecting difference,

For allowing difference,

For encouraging difference,

Until difference no longer makes a difference."

-Johnetta Cole

April Is Fair Housing Month (CONT.)

responded, in part, to this national tragedy by urging the bill's speedy Congressional approval. Since the 1966 open housing marches in Chicago, Dr. King's name had been closely associated with the fair housing legislation.

While Dr. King was a leader in the struggle for open housing, his acts alone would not have changed America. It was thousands of people across the US who participated in marches, sit-ins and other numerous protests that swayed opinions and ultimately changed this country.

Housing Rights, Inc. is one of many agencies in the Bay Area (and one of the oldest) processing thousands of complaints each year and striving to educate the public about their housing rights and responsibilities.

Fair Housing Month is a time to celebrate the progress we've made in opening the doors of housing opportunity to every citizen of this nation, regardless of race, gender, color, nationality, religion, family status, or disability. It is also a time to acknowledge the fair housing challenges that still remain, and collectively commit to finding viable solutions to those challenges.

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

At least 3.5 million incidents of housing discrimination are investigated a year. We know that only a very small percentage of people who experience housing discrimination report it. This leaves us with a staggering national epidemic. "Housing discrimination is a national problem that still affects millions of people. Housing choice plays a crucial role in determining one's ability to access critical societal and economic functions; quality schools, jobs, health care services, recreational facilities, public services, and transportation." The Department of Urban Develop-

Illegal housing discrimination can take many forms, some quite subtle: realtors showing apartments or homes only in certain neighborhoods, advertising housing only to preferred groups of people, denials of property insurance, discriminatory property appraisals, or refusals to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

ment has commissioned studies in recent years which document a significant amount of discrimination against African American, Latinos, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islanders and People with Disabilities. National studies show that while progress has been made, racial discrimination in housing still exists at unacceptable levels in our country. One out of every four or five Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, or Native Americans still faces discrimination in renting, buying, or financing housing. No one knows how these numbers translate at the local level.

One out of every five Americans has some type of disability and in a study commissioned by HUD and reported on in 2005 it appears that People with Disabilities are more likely to experience discrimination in housing (more than 50%) than are people who experience discrimination based upon race.

Low-income people, seniors and the disabled, seeking to purchase, refinance, or secure a reverse mortgage, are often targets for predatory lenders or loan fraud. Predatory lenders take advantage of borrowers with a

variety of abusive practices such as charging excessive interest rates or loan fees.

Illegal housing discrimination can take many forms, some quite subtle: realtors showing apartments or homes only in certain neighborhoods, advertising housing only to preferred groups of people, denials of property insurance, discriminatory property appraisals, or refusals to make reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

Whether people are trying to rent, buy, sell, or finance a home or apartment, as a tenant, homeowner, or landlord, they need to know the rights and protections provided by the Federal Fair Housing Act, and state and local fair housing laws. It's equally important for people to know where to file a complaint if they suspect they are a victim of discrimination or predatory lending.

Federal and State of California law makes it unlawful to discriminate in housing based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, source of income, age, marital status, disability or family status (families with children under the age of 18, or who are expecting a child).

You can help fight housing discrimination:

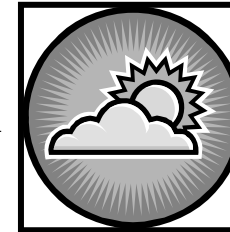
1. Know that it exists.
2. Educate yourself. What is housing discrimination? What are YOUR housing rights and responsibilities.
3. Become involved. Support the work of agencies such as Housing rights, Inc. (see last page for ideas!)

The more that members of the community are aware of these issues and aware that discrimination can and does occur the less it (discrimination) will in fact keep people from accessing homes of their choice.

Going For The Gold: Building On Faith

Discrimination in housing was the law of the land until fairly recently (1963). With a legacy of over 200 years of institutionalized discrimination, we can expect it to take at least until our 50th anniversary to reverse the damage caused by housing discrimination.

So, we're going for the gold. In planning to be around another 24 years we cannot think of anything more important than to recognize the contribution of other organizations working, as we are, for adequate housing for everyone.



Named for the long-time pastor of the adjacent Downs Memorial United Methodist Church, Bishop Roy C. Nichols Senior Housing is a 17-unit affordable senior complex in North Oakland that opened in Spring 2003. It was developed in partnership with Downs Community Development Corporation.

ALLEN TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH was organized in 1919 and has a rich heritage of making a positive difference in the lives of people in East Oakland, the Bay Area and around the world. Under the anointed leadership of Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr., Allen Temple Baptist Church has grown from a membership of 500 to over 5,000.

Housing Rights, Inc. will be recognizing at our annual reception on September 28th, 2006 (changed from April 27th) the following faith groups/project for their lasting contribution to our shared vision. These groups include:

- 🏠 Oakland Community Housing Inc. (OCHI) and collaborations with two local churches for two different senior housing developments on church property.
- 🏠 Allen Temple Baptist Church and the Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corporation
- 🏠 Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP)
- 🏠 Contra Costa Interfaith Housing Inc.
- 🏠 Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County and their revolving shelter.
- 🏠 Mt. Diablo Habitat for Humanity.

OAKLAND COMMUNITY HOUSING INC. was created in 1973 to serve Oakland residents whose homes were demolished for the Oakland Redevelopment Agency's construction of the City Center Project. The nonprofit agency was a collaborative effort of a grassroots, community-based coalition of local residents, churches, the Oakland Citizen's Committee for Urban Renewal, the Black Panther Party and the Oakland Legislative Council for Seniors, who came together to advocate for affordable replacement housing.

Sylvester Rutledge Manor is a 65-unit affordable apartment complex for low-income seniors. The development is a joint venture between OCHI and North Oakland Mission-

ary Baptist Church, whose church is directly adjacent to the property.

difference in the lives of people in East Oakland, the Bay Area and around the world. Under the anointed leadership of Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr., Allen Temple Baptist Church has grown from a membership of 500 to over 5,000.

THE ALLEN TEMPLE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION is a non profit corporation that was instituted in 1982, in the State of California. They own Allen Temple Arms #1 and #2. The mission of the Allen Temple Arms Retirement Community is to provide quality housing, services, and activities for qualified elderly and disabled persons with respect and dignity in a secure and loving Christian environment. They are the oldest anchor facility in the community renaissance, occurring in far East Oakland.

GRIP, GREATER RICHMOND INTERFAITH PROGRAM began in 1966 when a group of racially, culturally, and religiously diverse faith communities came together to address issues of social and economic justice. Now 40 congregations and hundreds of individuals around the Bay Area are active members of GRIP. In 2006, GRIP will be opening the \$3.8 million Souper Center as part of their 40th anniversary. The Souper Center will provide emergency housing to 40 to 60 families per year as well as daily meals, access to jobs and housing opportunities.

CONTRA COSTA INTERFAITH HOUSING, INC. (CCIH) is a service-oriented coalition of 15 faith communities in Central Costa County. The program's goal is to provide permanent supported housing for homeless families, along with life skill courses, job training, counseling and other services. Their first development is a 25 unit apartment

complex in Pleasant Hill—Garden Park Apartments.

THE CONTRA COSTA WINTER NIGHTS PROGRAM IS A PROJECT OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE OF THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY. After holding three town meetings in Orinda churches in late September and early October, the Homeless Summit of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County has decided to re-institute a congregational rotating shelter. Congregations throughout central and east Contra Costa are encouraged to provide space and/or volunteers to create a temporary winter nights shelter in one-, two- or three-week segments.

MT. DIABLO HABITAT FOR HUMANITY is an ecumenical, non-profit organization that builds simple, decent, and affordable homes with low-income people in need. Since its incorporation in 1990, Mt. Diablo Habitat has provided affordable housing for 62 families in East and Central Contra Costa County. Their concept is to build communities with community partnerships, to change lives through home construction. One of their next projects includes the House Built on Faith. A house and family will be 'adopted' by an interfaith collaborative brought together by Mt. Diablo Habitat for Humanity.

We are very proud that this year Faith Works! a collaboration between faith and labor organization in Contra Costa County will be joining us as a co-sponsor. They work to improve the quality of life in the County through the work of the residents.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to fight for equal access to housing for everyone by eliminating barriers to housing choice such as discrimination, sub-standard housing, ignorance, apathy and malice in order to eradicate illegal housing discrimination, prevent evictions/foreclosures and encourage diversity in our neighborhoods.

We assist individuals in exercising their housing rights to obtain and maintain the home of their choice and we promote understanding by tenants and landlords, housing consumers and housing providers of their rights and responsibilities. We do this through housing rights counseling/advocacy, education, outreach, investigation, mediation, self-advocacy, legal referrals and enforcement of fair housing laws.