

Housing Rights, Inc.

P.O. Box 12895
Berkeley, CA. 94712

Phone: 510-548-8776
Fax: 510-548-5805
E-mail:
hri@housingrights.com



Until difference no longer makes a difference....



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25 Years and Going Strong....

25 years ago this year, Sharon Mosely tried to find housing for herself and her twin daughters. No one would rent to her. She didn't think that was fair. Neither did the people at BANANAS. They founded the Housing Rights for Children Project which is Housing Rights, Inc. today.

We still don't think its fair when people can't find housing because they have children, have a disability or because of their race or religion or actually, ANY reason.



Join us in thanking Morrie Turner for not only this wonderful contribution (cartoon) to HRI but also for his dedication to diversity.

The other day we took a call from a women who was having a housing problem herself but wanted to also confirm that there is a law limiting the number of black and brown people living in a building....there are too many in hers. She wasn't too happy to learn that the same laws which protect her from unfair treatment apply equally to everyone, including people of different races or ethnicities.

Yes, we plan on being here for awhile. Last year we reached over 11,000 individu-

als and counseled over 3,000 households. This year we are on track to counsel over 4,000. Yes, there is a lot of work to do!

25 years and still going strong...we plan on being around for another 25 years. To that end we decided to spend this last year celebrating our past, present and future by recognizing the contribution that other people and organizations have made to our work.

Check out our website to find out more about these 25 individuals and organizations.

And mark your calendar. The big blow-out party, ending our year of celebration will take place on April 28, 2005.

Wanda Remmers, Executive Dir.



Housing Rights, Inc.

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Until difference no longer makes a difference....

Different Times

Standing with Heroes....

On November 4th, 2004 over 100 friends and family of Housing Rights, Inc. and honorees Helen Lima and Congresswoman Barbara Lee celebrated together at the Afghan Oasis Restaurant (in the Shattuck Hotel in Berkeley).

This wonderful occasion was part of a year long celebration of Housing Rights, Inc.'s 25th anniversary. Our final anniversary event will take place on April 28th, 2005 (see back page or our website for more information).

We took a moment to laugh, and join friends in reminiscing and good

food. And Chocolate! Don't forget the chocolate. Chocolate is an important part of our effort to take care of ourselves. We award chocolate certificates to our honorees. Our founding Executive Director Marianne Lawless old us that we could face any challenge as long as we had chocolate. So far, she's been right!

This occasion, important to Housing Rights, Inc., was clearly important to all of us as we recover from the election and prepare to meet the challenges ahead.

And it will take all of us to meet those challenges,

the courage of Congresswoman Barbara Lee standing up to all of the world to say that the Iraq war was wrong, Helen Lima, at 87, standing up for us and with us to challenge cuts to HUD and Housing Rights, Inc. taking on another 25 years.

Let us stand together.



Jeffrey Thomas accepting the Congresswoman's chocolate certificate.

Helen Lima: Marianne Lawless Hellraiser of the Year

I want to thank my friend Wanda Remmers and Housing Rights for this award. It is wonderful and very flattering to have my name linked with Barbara Lee's (Editor's note: our other honoree for the November 4th event). How

lucky we are to have her as our representative. She understands the problems of poor people and knows what to do.

I am also very proud to be associated with the Strawberry Creek Lodge

Legislative Committee. This award was earned in large part by the hard work of the Legislative Committee and I am glad to accept it for this collective of which I am a member. This committee recognized the need to

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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

Hellraiser

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build a network of support at the grassroots level for Congresswoman Barbara Lee to be successful in her actions--getting a discharge petition filed that would get the National Housing Trust Fund legislation out of the Financial Services Committee and onto the floor of Congress.

The Legislative Committee consists of 8 or 10 women residents at Strawberry Creek Lodge and myself. We are women who worked on jobs in our younger years, retired from these jobs and were prepared to spend our older years making baby blankets and baking cookies. We found our own housing under attack with the Bush Administration's hostility to programs which assist poor people. We were horrified at the extent of homelessness in the United States. Today there are about 3.5 million homeless people in the United States. Homelessness grew by 17% this last year. We joined the fight. We circulated a petition which asked congress to restore HUD including section 8 to its original scope and purpose. We secured 6,000 names on it. We wrote hundreds of letters, make hundreds

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of phone calls, responded to hundreds of email messages and made a video that is so modern and up-to-date that I can't even describe it because I am a computer idiot. Seniors in other parts of the country did similar work.

The combination of grass roots action with Barbara Lee's ability to rally the progressive Democrats, the Congressional Black Caucus and a few Republicans saved the day. Section 8 vouchers were included in the 2004 Federal Budget.

The housing crisis in this country has deepened in recent years--we must work to reverse that trend, to get government to ensure decent housing for all. Housing is a Human Right.

I want to thank you all for coming here tonight. I want to thank my

friends and family--my daughters, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren.

I'd like to end with words from Marge Piercy's poem To Be of Use:

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience, who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward, who do what has to be done, again and again

Helen Lima November 4, 2004.

Visit our website to see more pictures: www.housingrights.org



What's New.....

With the help of our wonderful volunteer Tricia, we were able to distribute 200 **Safe Home Bags**. These are bags which contain a variety of material on safety issues for the home. Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse, Smoking, Pests, Safe Sex, Disaster Preparedness, Lead Paint, we had it all and more. The packets were distributed (English and Spanish ver-

Be Safe



We want you to have a **SAFE** home!

sions) at local festivals. Congratulations Tricia. And we have material to make 200 more packets for next years round of festivals!

Also new is our

Housing Rights Lawyer Referral Service (#0120). We were certified in August and have been making referrals and meeting new attorneys. We are especially proud of our new collaboration with the Contra Costa County Bar Association and Bay Area Legal Aid. We are working on an attorney training which will start in January. More information on that later.

Anniversaries...

Noun 1. anniversary - the date on which an event occurred in some previous year (or the celebration of it).

The word anniversary itself refers to something that is recognized once a year. Though we've all probably used it for shorter recognition periods (six month anniversary of being hired into a job, two month anniversary of a new relationship, etc.). However, the key aspect to an 'anniversary' is that attachment of meaning to a period of time. We then 'recognize' that meaning with celebration, reflection, remembrances, etc. Anniversaries appear to be universal.

We find it humbling to recognize that the year 2004 holds not only our 25th anniversary, but the 15th anniversary of Tiananmen Square, the 50th anniversary of Brown v.



Board of Education, the 50th anniversary of the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights, the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act

and apropos to nothing other than the passage of time....the 50th anniversary of Elvis Presley's first recording!

We are sure that there are many other significant anniversaries being celebrated this year. Events from

the past that carry with them today lessons worth re-learning, remembering or teaching to others.

We at Housing Rights, Inc. are taking the opportunity that this year of celebration affords us (25 years is nothing to sneeze at!) to honor our past, celebrate our present and invest in our future! Last year, during year 24, we were just as committed as we are this year, in year 25. We expect that we will be as committed next year (year 26) as this year. However, by taking the time to reflect we can also take the time to appreciate one of the core truths of our work. We cannot do it alone. We are also taking this opportunity to 'bring new people' into our team by demonstrating the importance of our work.

Check out our website for more tidbits...www.housingrights.org

Ask Frannie...

Ask Frannie, The Fair Housing Fan

Q: I was late on rent this month. I tried to pay on the 6th (the rent is due by the 5th), but the landlord refused to take my rent unless I also paid a \$30 late fee. I didn't have the extra \$30, so my landlord gave me a three day notice the next day. I went into the management office after getting the three day notice so I could work out a payment arrangement, and I noticed another tenant paying their rent, without paying their late fee. I feel that the landlord is treating me unfairly because I'm the only African American in the complex. What can I do?

A: According to the California Fair

Housing (often known as the Rumford Fair Housing Act), as well as Title VIII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1968 (as amended in 1988), it is illegal for a landlord to discriminate in the provision of rental housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, and disability. Under state law, people are protected on the basis of their marital status, ancestry, sexual orientation, and source of income as well. These laws prohibit landlords from discrimination in the terms, conditions or privileges of sale or rental of a unit. If your landlord is forcing you to pay a late fee at the time you pay your rent, and is not requiring the same of the other tenants in the unit, he could be discriminating against you. Any time the landlord is treating you

Any time the landlord is treating you differently based on your membership in one of the groups that the Fair Housing laws protect, he could be unlawfully discriminating against you.

differently based on your membership in one of the groups that the Fair Housing laws protect, he could be unlawfully discriminating against you. Call Housing Rights, Inc. so we can discuss your options with you. 1800-261-2298.