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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

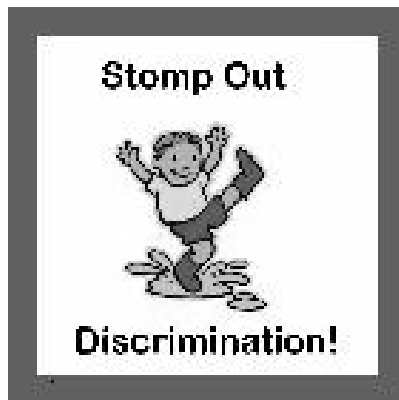
housing providers to understand their rights and responsibilities and resolve problems, so that EVERYONE will have a real opportunity to live in decent, affordable housing wherever it may be located.

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!

Visit our website to learn more and to find out the many ways you are able to support the very important work of Housing Rights, I

Visit us at:

housingrights.org



Housing Rights, Inc.

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Until difference no longer makes a difference....

Different Times

Spotlight on: Board Member Phil Lawson

Phil Lawson joined the Housing Rights, Inc. board on December 11, 2004. Phil has had a long and distinguished career as a Methodist Minister. He retired in June of 2003. Congresswoman Barbara Lee noted this event in the



Congressional Record noting his many accomplishments and thanking "him for being an exemplary role model, pastor, and preacher."

Soon after this so-called retirement, Phil began working for EBHO (East Bay Housing Organizations) as the Interfaith Program Director. He leads EBHO's Interfaith Action in Housing Program. He brings his wealth of experience leading both interfaith and community based

collaboration in the East Bay. Under his leadership EBHO has significantly expanded its support of faith-based communities and their contributions to address the affordable housing crisis in the East Bay. To find out more go to www.ebho.org and our website.

Housing Rights, Inc. is very proud to have Rev. Phil Lawson on our Board of Directors.

(picture is from our 25th anniversary celebration April 28th, 2005)

Annual Get-Together

Join us on November 3rd, 2005 at 6 p.m. for a reception recognizing the contribution of our Lawyer Referral Service.

We will also be presenting our annual report to our supporters and laying out our plans for the upcoming year.

All previous year supporters (individual, corporate donors and volunteers) are invited to attend as our guests. For others there is a \$25 fee to cover costs.

The reception will be held in Oakland. Details are available on our website and will be mailed to you soon.

We are very proud of our Lawyer Referral Service and the many people involved in making it successful. Just one year old in August, we have had one referral successfully settled and many more in the pipeline. If you are interested in joining the LRS (we have general housing rights, fair housing,

predatory lending, personal injury and mediation panels) call us or visit our website: www.housingrights.org/lawyers.htm.



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SAVE THE DATE!
Annual Reception honoring Local Heroes:
April 26th , 2006

"We are for difference:

For respecting difference,

For allowing difference,

For encouraging difference,

Until difference no longer makes a difference."

-Johnetta Cole

DID YOU KNOW?

Housing Rights, Inc. is one of many organizations throughout our country whose sole purpose is to assist low and lower income households find and keep adequate housing by exercising their housing rights. This isn't always easy. Or to be more accurate, it is often very difficult.

And last year, Housing Rights, Inc. staff worked hard to do just that for 3,147 households. And there are a couple thousand more people we referred to agencies closer to where they live.

Last year our clients came from (in order of numbers): City of Richmond, Urban Contra Costa County, City of Berkeley, City of Concord, City of Antioch, northern Urban Alameda County and City of Walnut Creek.

Discrimination complaints that we handled were for:

Disability: 37%
Race: 16%, and
Familial status: 10%

And by far the complaints we received from renters were for habitability. That is serious need for repairs to their home. Next in line were complaints regarding a general need for repairs, issues regarding security deposits and then evictions.

In addition to working with our clients (such as the family described in the next column) individually we have also developed the following Programs and resources:

Safe Home, Healthy Home Campaign: this project was created by staff who were frustrated by the numbers of calls that we receive from people who do not feel safe in their own home. The project grew to include a broader definition of safety. We have distributed hundreds of bag of pamphlets and brochures, in English and Spanish, on a wide variety of topics such as: sec-

ond hand smoke, domestic violence, child care, child-proofing, lead-based paint, safe-sex, vermin prevention, etc.

He has just brought his baby daughter home from a two week stay in the County Hospital- for asthma -so serious her life is in danger. The source of the danger? Her home. Their Public Housing Authority apartment is full of mold. They clean and then clean and it keeps coming back. Their limited English has made it difficult for them to advocate for themselves, though the nurses have tried to help. All they want is another place to live, one without mold so their daughter can breathe freely.

Our hope is to provide renters with as much information as possible so they can do their part to keep their home safe.



Rentersrights.info. In collaboration with East Bay Community Law Center we founded the Repair & Deduct Project. The website for that project is rentersrights.info. In addition to containing information regarding getting needed repairs

through the repair & deduct method allowed under California law, the site also included a number of 'self-help' tools for renters with their landlords. If they don't work, agencies such as ours can then help.

Get Banked with HRI: Housing Rights, Inc. staff are trained to provide financial education courses. Approximately 37% of our callers do not use banks of any kind. Leaving them to the high charges and excessive fees of payday lenders and check-cashing establishments. By provide the courses we are able to easy the way for our callers into the world of banks. Local lending institutions partner with us to assist first time (or returning) customers open up accounts.



When Your Home Makes You Sick: Handbook which outlines, for renters their responsibilities for keeping their units free of mold and vermin and the responsibilities of their landlords.

Tenant 101: Six lesson handbook orienting the first time renter (targeted to high school students) to the rights and responsibilities of being a renter.

Tenant's Logbook: Handbook designed to aid the renter in documenting all aspects of their rental relationship.

Call us to learn more!

Hurricane Katrina

Disasters bring out the best in people and the worst in people. And we have images of both as most of us have watched helplessly as our neighbors on the Gulf Coast, just miles away from help, have been stranded. Not far across the ocean, but right here, where most of us have felt safe.

None of us are immune from disaster. But if disaster strikes we have believed that help would be on its way, immediately.

What has happened to our collective will to help those less fortunate than us?

Image: women screaming into the news camera "She's not dead! She just needs oxygen!" She is a caregiver for a frail elderly woman confined to bed. She did not leave her 'charge' to go to safety when the alarm sounded. But stayed with her.

Image: news report of a 6 year old boy, carrying a 5 month old baby and followed by other young children. How did they survive?

Ask Frannie...

Dear Frannie,

I don't think my landlord deserves his rent: he doesn't make repairs, he doesn't respect my privacy, he let's my neighbors have all-night parties. Why should I pay my rent. He doesn't earn it!

From: HAD IT!

Dear Had It,

Don't fall into that trap. Pay your rent! Courts have very little patience with renters who do not pay the rent, even when justified under the law. So PAY YOUR RENT!

Many of us have decided, not to watch but have put their own lives on hold to help, in person. Others have donated time, money, goods and talent.

If you haven't don't so yet, you may contact the following groups to help.

American Red Cross
(800) HELP NOW (435-7669) English
(800) 257-7575 Spanish
<http://www.redcross.org>

Operation Blessing
(800) 436-6348
<http://www.ob.org>

America's Second Harvest
(800) 344-8070
<http://www.secondharvest.org>

The United Way
(415) 808-4300
<http://national.unitedway.org>

AmeriCares
(800) 486-HELP (4357)
<http://www.americares.org>

Catholic Charities, USA
(800) 919-9338

There are other steps you can take to get needed repairs, notify your landlord about your privacy rights and noisy neighbors. And there are some resources to help you take those steps:

Www.rentersrights.info is a website of the Repair & Deduct Project a joint project of Housing Rights, Inc. and East Bay Community Law Project. There you will find a number of self-help packets designed to walk you through the steps to addressing the problems you've written about. There is also a copy of the State of California's Tenant

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org>

You might also think of other creative ways to help....provide a home to a college student displaced by Katrina, or sponsor a family.

"Few will have the greatness to bend history: but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation." RFK, 1966

MISSION STATEMENT

Housing Rights, Inc. works to eradicate housing discrimination and to promote understanding by tenants and landlords of their rights and responsibilities through outreach, investigation, mediation, education and enforcement of fair housing laws.

Handbook. And if all of that doesn't help. Call so we can discuss your options with you. 1800-261-2298.

If we're not the right agency will refer you to one that is!

Check out our website for more help.

