Patterson v The Pines Is Settled: GO DEB!

Deborah Patterson has at last settled her disability discrimination claim against The Pines of Cloverlane apartment complex for an undisclosed amount. Patterson’s initial request for modification to the door and sidewalk outside her building came in late 1994. Final work on the sidewalk wasn’t completed until the fall of 1997. The settlement ends Patterson’s long battle to gain independent access to her apartment building.

Patterson sued the Balcor Company in February 1996, after her attempts to negotiate with the management failed. When the Pittsfield Township complex was sold, the new owners, Equity Residential Properties Trust, were added to the suit. Although Patterson rents a barrier-free unit, prior to the modifications she was unable to open the door to her building without assistance. Once through the door, Patterson was forced to contend with a narrow sidewalk in poor repair that lacked adequate safety barriers and rails. Non-disabled tenants in Patterson’s building use the stairs at the front of the complex.

During the three-year fight, Patterson vowed to Fair Housing Center staff that she would never give up. Patterson, joined by fellow members of disability rights group ADAPT, picketed the Michigan Avenue complex, now known as The Pines, throughout the summer and fall of 1996. “I found it interesting that while the new owners rushed to paint and re-side complex buildings and even resurface the

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Familial Status Suit Brings Settlement

Stacey Faulk accepted $17,800 to settle her familial status case against Ismat Hamid, the owner of Holiday Star Apartments in Ypsilanti. According to the lawsuit, Faulk visited Holiday Star to rent an apartment for herself, her then 2-year-old daughter and a friend when the owner told her he didn’t rent to families with children in that building. She reportedly told the owner that barring children is illegal. Faulk says he responded by saying he didn’t care and that she could go ahead and sue him. FHC testing supported Faulk’s claim of discrimination against families with children.

FHC Cooperating Attorneys Michael J. Steinberg and Daniel E. Manville filed the case in Federal District Court. The case was assigned to Magistrate Steven D. Pepe. Steinberg, an FHC Cooperating Attorney since 1993, is acting as the Interim Director of Litigation for the Michigan Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union in Detroit.
**CASES SETTLED**

**Pike v Harbour Club**

Larry Pike accepted $750 in addition to a lighted door bell to settle his fair housing case against Harbour Club Ltd. Mr. Pike is deaf and required a visual alternative to the building's buzzer system. Without the accommodation there was no way for visitors to let Pike know they were outside waiting to be buzzed through the security doors.

The case was filed in Wayne County Circuit Court by FHC Cooperating Attorney David Stokes of Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service. Judge Marianne Battanni heard the case. Battanni refused to grant Harbour Club's attorney a motion for summary disposition and the case was settled soon after.

**Williams v LaForge Villa**

With the requested ramp constructed, Pamela Williams has accepted $5,000 to settle her disability complaint against LeForge Villa Apartments in Ypsilanti. FHC Cooperating Attorney Daniel E. Manville filed suit on behalf of Williams, who uses a wheelchair. The suit, filed in Washtenaw County Circuit Court claimed violations of the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act. Filed in July of 1997, the case was assigned to Judge David S. Swartz.

**Matts v Lakeview**

The first trial in FHC-Washtenaw County history ended with Oscar Matts winning a jury verdict against Lakeview Mobile Home Park. Cooperating Attorneys David Nacht and David Cahill reported a $2,500 settlement in Matts' disability discrimination claim. Matts, a tenant at Lakeview for close to twenty years, uses a wheelchair.

Nacht estimates Lakeview spent upwards of $30,000 to defend themselves against Matts. In the end the mobile home park agreed to build a ramp to the office. Mr. Matts argued that Lakeview staff refused his request for reasonable accommodation there by slowing down progress on a ramp from Matt's porch to the driveway, keeping the office inaccessible and refusing to reimburse Matts $425 for widening the driveway to his mobile home lot. The case was argued in front of Washtenaw County Circuit Visiting Judge Charles Kaufman.

**CASES FILED**

**NAACP v Adrian Manor**

The Lenawee County Chapter of the NAACP has filed a race discrimination suit against Adrian Manor Apartments. An FHC investigation of the complex was triggered by a complaint from Rob and Carla Baty, a white couple living at Adrian Manor. According to the Batys the manager told them of a vacant unit and said they should tell people as long as they weren't Black. FHC testing supports the Baty's charge of race discrimination.

The case was filed in Federal District Court by FHC Cooperating Attorneys Michael J. Steinberg and Daniel E. Manville. The case is assigned to Judge John C. O'Meara. The complex is owned by Granite Management, Inc., of Toledo, Ohio.
Ann Arbor’s ACA Files Accessibility Complaints with HUD

The Association for Community Advocacy filed four fair housing complaints with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The complaints are filed against the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, and Pittsfield Township. According to ACA, all took HUD funding to build or renovate housing, but none lived up to the obligation to make 5% of all HUD funded projects since 1988 accessible to people with mobility impairments. The complaints also cite the cities and townships for not offering existing accessible units to people with disabilities, instead of renting them to those without disabilities.

2nd Annual Housing Advocates Training

We held our second annual Housing Advocates Training in November 1997. Human service workers from across Washtenaw County participated in the one-day training on landlord/tenant law, fair housing and housing subsidy programs. Trainers included FHC-Washtenaw County staff, Mike Gatti, Lisa Ruby, Hank Wolfe of Legal Services of Southeastern Michigan, and Jim Schaafsma of the Michigan Poverty Law Program.

Patterson v The Pines

— continued from front page

tennis courts, they wouldn’t provide a tenant with basic access to her building,” noted ADAPT member and FHC Board member Bob Liston.

Fair Housing Center Cooperating Attorneys Gayle Rosen from Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service and Kathy Peterson filed the law suit in Washtenaw County Circuit Court alleging violations of the Michigan Handicappers’ Civil Rights Act. The case was later handled by Rosen and Mary Michalak, also of Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service. The case was originally assigned to Judge Melinda M. Morris.

Fair Housing AATA Bus Poster

Thanks to Espresso Royale Caffé and the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority for our fair housing bus posters! Espresso Royale provided the funding and the AATA displayed them on local buses in August and September of last year.
Help Host
100 Dinners
This Spring

Eat, drink, and mark the 30th anniversary of Federal Fair Housing Act (passed in April of 1968). Here is how it works: FHC staff, friends, supporters, and cooperating attorneys invite guests to a dinner party. Each guest purchases a ticket for the dinner from the FHC. Last year we held ten parties and raised close to $2,000. To be a host of 100 Dinners for Fair Housing this spring, call Pam Kisch at the FHC office, (734) 994-3426.

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Thanks, Sharon!
Intern Sharon Thiel has worked with the FHC staff on fair housing investigations. Sharon’s internship is coordinated through the University of Michigan course “Women in the Community.”

The Fair Housing Center needs testers — especially women over 30.
Call Mary Bejian at 994-3426

Are you female and over 30?

FAIR HOUSING CENTER
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