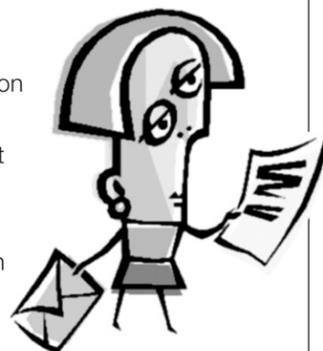


Thank you Bar Foundation and MSHDA

The Michigan State Bar Foundation and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) have each committed \$10,000 toward a state-wide Housing Advocates Training. The goal is to educate staff of community service organizations on fair housing law, landlord tenant law, and housing subsidy programs. Working closely with Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM), FHC-Southeast started the training in Washtenaw County about six years ago. FHC-Southeast will write a manual, create presentation materials, and hold at

least four state-wide trainings for groups like the Michigan Association of Centers for Independent Living and the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. LSSCM and the Michigan Poverty Law Project will provide trainers on landlord tenant issues and assistance in writing the manual.



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Did you know?

Total FHC settlements now exceed \$900,000!

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August 2006

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\$50,000 for Parkway Meadows Tenant

Frye v Keystone Management Group / Parkway Meadows Apartments

Ann Arbor

Carol Frye asked the management of her complex for permission to install a ramp and roll-in shower at her own expense. "Your requests are denied" said the letter from Keystone. The management company said neither of the requests was possible. By February 2004 Carol Frye had not been outside of her home in two months. Both entrances to her apartment have steps and Ms. Frye was no longer able to walk up and down them or step into the only shower in her unit.

FHC staff quickly showed the company that, not only were the modifications possible, but the Parkway Meadows was obligated to pay for the work. Our research found that the federally-funded apartment complex had close to a \$1,000,000 in reserve for renovations, including accommodations like those requested by Carol Frye. FHC friend and architect David Esau provided plans for both a ramp and a



Carol Frye with attorney J. Mark Finnegan

roll-in shower. Instead of the accommodation, Ms. Frye received a bill for painting and maintenance work done five months before.

FHC referred Carol to FHC Cooperating Attorney J. Mark Finnegan of Heberle & Finnegan who filed suit on her behalf. Now Carol has the ramp, a new roll-in shower, a \$50,000 settlement, and freedom to come and go from her home. The case was assigned to Judge John Feikens of the US District Federal Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division.

Court: Federal
Settlement: \$50,000 plus \$62,000 in construction and attorney fees)

we provide advice, advocacy, conciliation, attorney referral, and community education

\$30,000 Settles Familial Status Case

Bevins v Mick Apartments Milan (Monroe County)

Christina Bevins was eight months pregnant with her first child when she contacted the FHC. She told FHC staff that the owners of Mick Apartments in Milan offered her an apartment and later turned her down because a baby would be living in the unit.

Testing, and a taped phone message, supported this claim. FHC Cooperating Attorneys Jonathan Weber and Jonathan Rose filed suit on behalf of Ms. Bevins in U.S. Federal District Court, the case was assigned to Judge Gerald E. Rosen.

Court: Federal
Settlement: \$30,000



Christina Bevins

cases settled

Caldwell v Bailey

Adrian (Lenawee County)

Samadai Caldwell, a mother of two children, accepted \$7,500 to settle her familial status claim against Beverly Bailey of Adrian. In March 2002 Ms. Caldwell tried to rent an apartment owned by Ms. Bailey, but said she was rejected because one of her children was two years old. According to Ms. Caldwell, Ms. Bailey said she had a policy of not renting the apartment to anyone with children under four years of age. FHC testing supported Ms. Caldwell's claim of discrimination based on familial status. FHC cooperating attorney Steven Tomkowiak filed the case in US District



Samadai Caldwell and daughter

Federal Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division. The case was assigned to Judge Arthur J. Tarnow.

Court: Federal Settlement: \$7,500

Russman v Merrit

Ann Arbor

Pregnant with her first child, Pamela Russman told the FHC she was denied the right to look at an apartment because she was expecting a baby. Testing supported her claim of discrimination based on familial status. Filed by FHC Cooperating Attorney Denise M. Heberle of Heberle & Finnegan, the case was assigned to Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff.

Court: Federal Settlement: \$7,500

other news

Lauretta Codrington

After twelve years of dedicated service, Lauretta Codrington has stepped down from the Fair Housing Center Board of Directors. Lauretta has been an active member of the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor communities for years. We first met Loretta in 1991 when she and her husband, along with their three children were denied rental of a three bedroom house in Ypsilanti Township. The owner refused to take the Codringtons' deposit, saying she didn't want to rent to a family of five. The owner later agreed to rent the house to a white FHC tester saying she had a family of five. We appreciate all that Lauretta has done to help fight housing discrimination and wish her well.

Arcus Study

The Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan received funding from the Arcus Foundation for the Michigan Fair Housing Centers to test for housing discrimination based on sexual orientation. Kristen J. Cuhran coordinated the tests conducted by the Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan.

Very few complaints of housing discrimination based on sexual orientation are made to Michigan's private fair housing centers but we did find evidence of discrimination in our testing. The kind of evidence found included differences in rental rates, differences in level of encouragement, charging two application fees for the same-sex couple but only one for the husband-wife team, and statements that might be considered sexual harassment.

New Coordinator of Investigations

Tiffany M. Caldwell joined the Fair Housing Center in January 2005 as the Coordinator of Investigations. In her first six months at the FHC, Tiffany's work as a test coordinator led to two cases being ready for further action, with one case currently being prepared for litigation. Prior to joining the FHC staff, Tiffany completed all training required for Real Estate professionals in the State of Michigan. Tiffany holds a BA from Albion College, and is working on a masters degree in organizational leadership



Tiffany M. Caldwell

Visit our web site:
www.fhcsoutheast.org

cases filed

Tyus v Fairway Trails Apartments and Benchmark Management Corp.

Ypsilanti Township

After living in the Fairway Trails Apartments for three months Harry Tyus asked if, instead of the first week of the month, he could pay his rent the third week after his Social Security disability check arrived. The former tow truck driver liked the location and convenience of the apartment but not the monthly \$50 late fee on his rent. FHC staff made a written request for accommodation on behalf of Mr. Tyus. Instead of an accommodation, Mr. Tyus received an eviction notice. Legal Services attorney Henry Wolfe responded to the eviction with fair housing counter claims. In October 2004 Washtenaw County Judge John B. Collins ordered the complex to accommodate Mr. Tyus' request, then the complex refused to re-new his lease forcing him to move to a less convenient location. FHC-Southeast worked with Mr. Tyus to file a HUD complaint. HUD gave Mr. Tyus the option of taking his case to the Department of Justice. In May 2006 Judith Levy, Assistant US Attorney in Detroit filed suit claiming retaliation against Mr. Tyus. FHC cooperating attorney J. Mark Finnegan represents Mr. Tyus. The case has been assigned to Judge John C. O'Meara of the US Federal District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division.

Brown v University Management, Inc.

Ypsilanti

Leslie Brown worked hard to secure the funding for the first month's rent and security deposit on an apartment for her family. She was especially looking forward to moving her family into a home before Thanksgiving. On the day she was set to move in, Ms. Brown claims the landlord informed her that the original unit was unavailable. In her FHC complaint Ms. Brown described the alternative apartment as filthy to the point of being uninhabitable. According to Ms. Brown the landlord said the environment in the alternate apartment was one that "you people" should be used to. In addition to not having a place to live, Ms. Brown said the landlords refused to return the money for the rent and security deposit meaning that the family had nowhere to live through the winter. FHC testing supported Ms. Brown's claim of discrimination based on race. FHC Cooperating Attorneys Jonathan Weber and Jonathan Rose are representing Ms. Brown in the case in the US District Federal Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division. The case has been assigned to Judge Denise Page Hood.

Help Expand Our Services

With your help, the Fair Housing Center can turn stories of discrimination into stories of justice. The FHC is the only group in Washtenaw, Lenawee and Monroe counties providing testing services — often the only way to uncover evidence of housing discrimination. We need your support in providing investigative services, advocacy, advice, conciliation, attorney referral and community education to all three counties. All donations are tax deductible.

Make a Special Gift

We appreciate those of you who have already made a donation to the FHC this year. Will you consider making a special summer contribution? Any contribution, large or small, keeps the FHC working for equal housing opportunity. **Just clip and mail the form below.** *Thanks for your support!*

membership drive

Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan

Name _____ Date _____

Organization _____

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City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

- New Member**
- Renewing Member**
- Much Appreciated Mid-Year Gift**

- \$100
- \$50
- \$35
- \$250
- \$ _____

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