



FRIENDS OF FAIR HOUSING

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Quarterly Newsletter for the Friends of Fair Housing

FHC Provides Almost Half a Million Dollars in Emergency Mortgage Assistance Grants

Program Saves 182 Families From Foreclosure

At a time when the country is in a housing crisis that centers around a foreclosure epidemic, the Fair Housing Center (FHC) is working diligently to put a stop to the malady that is destroying neighborhoods and costing families their American dream of homeownership. Communities around the country are seeing “For Sale” signs popping up at unprecedented rates, largely due to the foreclosure debacle. This costs neighborhoods and municipalities millions of dollars in loss of tax revenue and causes the decline in values of homes surrounding foreclosed properties; not to mention the introduction of blight and crime in otherwise stable areas.

According to RealtyTrac, in November, 2008, one in every 392 Ohio homes was in foreclosure. In Lucas County in 2008, there were 4,093 foreclosures.

To combat this plague, FHC has implemented an Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program that provides grants to individuals and families who meet income guidelines established by funders. These range from 35% or below the Area Median Income to 300% or below the Federal Poverty Guideline to 50-80% of the Area Median Income, thus covering a wide income range. **This program has provided**

182 grants totaling \$484,224 to Lucas County residents.

Funding for the Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program also represents a patchwork of cooperation from a variety of sources, including the Ohio Department of Development, Lucas County Job and Family Services, Toledo-Lucas County Housing Fund, and Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati.



The benefits of this program are that homeowners are able to remain in their homes, contributing to stable families. Additionally, the program reduces neighborhood blight and crime, which contributes to the stabilization of the community. Finally, each time a house is saved from foreclosure, revenue from property taxes remains stable, and local school districts

remain strong.

These collaborations play a vital part in combating foreclosures. Each partner plays an integral role in the success of our efforts. These alliances have had a positive impact on individuals, families, neighborhoods and our entire community. “The Center thanks all of our staff and funders who are working to preserve the American dream of homeownership,” stated Katherine Lawson Broka, FHC President and CEO.

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From the President & CEO



Dear Colleagues,

One year ago, I started off my remarks by saying that record foreclosure rates and a sluggish economy could earmark 2008 as a “disaster in the making.” I went on to say that, in spite of that, I looked forward to the coming year and what it would hold. I knew our agency and our entire community had much hard work ahead of us if we were to weather the storm.

We have, indeed, endured a year of great turmoil, especially in Northwest Ohio. Yet, during these times of skyrocketing food and gas prices, as well as above-average unemployment and foreclosure rates, I have been struck by the undying spirit our country has exhibited. We pulled together as a nation and went to the polls in record numbers to vote for change. We came together as a community to help those in need. And on a personal note, I truly believe that my staff worked harder and with more dedication in 2008 than ever before.

A great example of that are statistics that appeared on the same page as my article last year under our “Restoring the Dream” Project. It stated that the Center had saved over \$2.37 million in monetary benefits to consumers since the project’s inception in 2003. In just the past year alone, that statistic has more than doubled! We are now almost at the \$5 million mark and rising.

During the past year, I have seen my staff work long into the night and on weekends in order to help save homes from foreclosure. I have also seen them cry with families whose homes could not be saved. I have watched them help people who have been discriminated against because of their disability, familial status or color of their skin. I want to take this opportunity to thank my staff so much for all their hard work and dedication. They are the best!!!

Yours in Fair Housing,

Katherine Lawson Broka

Katherine Lawson Broka
President and CEO

\$65,000 Settlement Reached in Case Alleging Disability Discrimination in Housing

The Toledo Fair Housing Center and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission announced that an agreement has been reached resolving a housing discrimination lawsuit filed against a Sylvania, Ohio landlord who refused to allow the family of a disabled young boy to erect a wheelchair ramp so he could have access to the home the family was renting.

For almost four years, the family had repeatedly asked the landlord for permission to install a wheelchair ramp to the front door of the house so the boy would not have to pull himself off his wheelchair and drag himself up the front steps of his home when the school bus dropped him off each day.

The family had gone to the landlord requesting a reasonable accommodation for the boy who was dependent on a wheelchair. They told the landlord that they had hired a builder at their own expense to build a ramp to the front door and that the Ability Center would install it for them. Each time the family requested permission to install the ramp, the landlord came up with an excuse as to why they couldn't do it.

The family contacted the Fair Housing Center and filed a discrimination complaint. After the Ohio Civil Rights Commission investigated the allegation, they issued a decision that there was probable cause that discrimination had occurred. The case was settled for a sum of \$65,000, with the law firm of Rehlman and Dane, PLLC, representing the plaintiffs in the action.

Renters in Fannie Mae-Owned Foreclosed Properties Eligible to Stay in Their Homes

On January 13, Fannie Mae (FNM/NYSE) announced the establishment of a new National Real Estate Owned (REO) Rental Policy that will allow qualified renters in Fannie Mae-owned foreclosed properties to stay in their homes. The company currently has an eviction suspension in place through the end of January which will allow for the new policy to be fully operational prior to the suspension concluding.

“Renters in foreclosed properties have often been a casualty of the foreclosure crisis the country is facing,” said Michael Williams, chief operating officer of Fannie Mae. “This policy will allow qualified renters to remain in Fannie Mae-owned properties should they choose to do so, mitigate the disruption of personal lives that foreclosures can cause, and help bring a measure of stability to communities impacted by high foreclosure rates.”

The new policy applies to renters occupying foreclosed properties at the time Fannie Mae acquires the property. Renters occupying any type of single-family property will be eligible including residents of two- to four-unit properties, condos, co-ops, single-family detached homes and manufactured housing. Eligible renters will be offered a new month-to-month lease with Fannie Mae or financial assistance for their transition to new housing should they choose to vacate the property. The properties must meet state laws and local code requirements for a rental property.

While the company markets the properties for sale, Fannie Mae will manage the properties through a real estate broker or a property management company. The company will not require security deposits to be posted in connection with this program.

Renters in the foreclosed properties will be asked to pay market rate rent under the new leases. Rates may be determined by reviewing local comparable rents, conducting a neighborhood survey, or through other relevant indicators. Rates will also be subject to any legal rent control restrictions. The company will review each instance where the market rate may require a tenant to pay additional rent and will work to reach an equitable resolution.

On behalf of the company, property managers are contacting renters in Fannie Mae-owned foreclosed properties to notify them of their options.





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Restoring the Dream

PREDATORY LENDING REMEDIATION PROGRAM UPDATE

- 77 Loans remediated through Sept. 25, 2008
- 48 Loan modifications with current lenders
- 26 Loans refinanced with local lending partners and/or Northwest Ohio Development Agency (NODA)
- Over \$4.8 million in monetary benefits to consumers (average = \$62,831)
- Average reduction in monthly payment = \$220.75

