



NEWS FROM HOME

SUMMER 2016

2400 READING RD. CINCINNATI, OH 45202

JENIECE JONES,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fair housing impacts so many community causes—it’s hard to put it all into words. HOME’s mission is to eliminate unlawful discrimination in housing. HOME advocates and enforces housing regulations for all protected classes and promotes stable, integrated communities. If HOME can be of service to your organization, group, or individuals in your networks, please let us know. We’d love to connect!

— Jeniece Jones, M.P.A., J.D.

COMMUNITY
BUILDING

AFFORDABLE
HOUSING



BUILDING VISITABLE COMMUNITIES

Hearth Home Communities built four homes with visitable features as a part of the 2014 Citirama in College Hill. “The idea behind visitability is so that anyone living there or visiting feels comfortable and not distinguished out from others,” said T.J. Ackermann, a founder of Hearth Home Communities.

“Visitability” describes basic features that allow people with mobility impairments to enter any single family home. The three necessary features are: a no-step entry on an accessible route; main floor doors with a minimum width of 32 inches and hallways with a minimum width of 36 inches; and main floor access to at least a half bath.

Hearth Home’s decision to build visitable homes was not approached from a needs basis but

because it is the responsible thing to do. Including visitable features in new construction is a low cost addition but requires thought and planning at the forefront.

Hearth Home relies on the expertise from local advocates like Heather Sturgill, a member of HOME’s Board of Directors, Kat Lyons, Advocacy Coordinator at the Center for Independent Living Options, and People Working Co-operatively to provide insight into

accessibility and improvements to consider in the future.

In 2015, Hearth Home completed the Villages of Whitewater, a development of single-family, ranch-style, visitable rental homes in Harrison. Many residents realized they’re looking for a home with visitable features without knowing the terminology. Hearth Home is currently building new, visitable homes that will be featured in the upcoming 2016 Citirama.



The Villages of Whitewater is located at 10400 Edgewood Road, Harrison, OH 45030

CLIENT STORIES

Barbara and her dog, Norrie, came to HOME through the SPCA Cincinnati. Due to her building's "no pet" policy, Barbara had kept Norrie in her car for over a year, sometimes spending the night in her car to be with Norrie. The SPCA's Animal Control Officers regularly checked on Norrie, who was always healthy and well taken care of.

An SPCA employee was aware of Barbara's fair housing rights and told her that "no pet" policies do not apply to emotional support animals. The SPCA helped Barbara register Norrie as an emotional support animal and then contacted HOME to learn how to submit a reasonable accommodation request to Barbara's landlord.

When Barbara's request was denied, **Carol Coaston**, HOME's Client Services Coordinator, stepped in. Carol worked with the building managers, explained Barbara's fair housing rights, and eventually got the reasonable accommodation approved. Barbara and Norrie are now together in her apartment where they can both live safely and comfortably.



Left to right: Corrine Dates (SPCA), Brandon Corcoran (SPCA), Norrie, Barbara, and Carol Coaston



Paul Breidenbach is HOME's Hispanic Tenant Advocate. Paul works with individuals who are in danger of losing housing or are experiencing tenant-landlord issues. Paul provides information on Ohio tenant-landlord law and advocates on his clients' behalves.

Paul has been heavily involved with clients who reside at a large

apartment complex in the Cincinnati area. A lot of Paul's work is conducted at the complex, where he can investigate issues in person and provide reassurance to his clients, who have felt a lack of support from other organizations.

Most of the residents are Hispanic and many are undocumented immigrants. This makes residents vulnerable to retaliation if they complain too loudly.

In an effort to enhance the quality of life for residents, a Work Group was formed. The group consists of residents, management, local government officials, social service agencies, like HOME, and others. At the first Work Group meeting, tenants expressed frustration with conditions in apartments. Common issues include broken air condi-

tioning units, leaking pipes, and incomplete repairs. Management expressed their own concerns regarding poor tenant practices but also asked for patience in completing requests for repairs.

The Work Group developed a process for residents to file complaints so that management and a local government official have matching records. Management is concerned this will inevitably slow and confuse requests for repairs but the local official believes it allows a more diligent follow-up process.

Paul continues to fight for his clients' fair housing rights and advocates on their behalves to management and the local official. Progress is slow but Paul remains hopeful that his clients will be able to enjoy their homes.

HUD CLARIFIES PROTECTIONS

In April, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced new guidance regarding renting to people with criminal records. Policies must distinguish between arrests and convictions. An arrest by itself is not enough to deny an applicant. When assessing convictions, landlords must consider factors like the nature and severity of the crime.



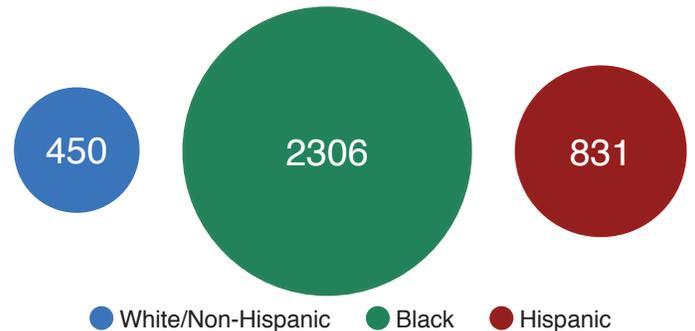
The Center for American Progress estimates as many as 1 in 3 Americans have some sort of criminal record

Although individuals with a criminal record are not protected under the Fair Housing Act, HUD acknowledges that blanket policies banning people with a criminal record have a disparate impact on African American and Hispanic applicants. A policy can be found to have a disparate impact when it affects some groups of people more than others.

Black and Hispanic Americans are incarcerated at a disproportional rate. The U.S. population is 64% White, 13% Black, and 16% Hispanic. These groups make up 39%, 40%, and 19%, respectively, of the U.S. incarcerated population.

A blanket policy may be found to violate the Fair Housing Act but the discriminatory impact of a policy must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in that group



Calculated by the Prison Policy Initiative from U.S. Census 2010



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