



Housing rights advocacy for victims of domestic violence

October 14, 2011 — Incidents of domestic violence can threaten a family's housing stability. Landlords may refuse to rent to a past victim of domestic violence or threaten to evict a tenant if an incident of domestic violence occurs.

Our community is not immune to this issue. In fact, Fair Housing Contact Service (FHCS), an Akron-based civil rights organization, identified a local landlord who threatened to begin the eviction process against a single mother if she was abused in her apartment. FHCS filed a charge of housing discrimination with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) alleging discrimination on the basis of sex because statistics show that women are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic violence. Discrimination on the basis of sex is prohibited by state and federal fair housing laws. In September, FHCS received a favorable determination from the OCRC indicating the landlord had discriminated on the basis of sex due to her comments regarding domestic violence.

Reflecting on this determination, Tamala Skipper, FHCS Executive Director said, "This case sheds light on an emerging issue, and FHCS is a proud advocate for the housing rights of victims of domestic violence. This determination is a step toward our goal of equal housing opportunity."

To continue to highlight this issue, FHCS is pleased to host its 46th Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Thursday, October 27, 2011. This year's Keynote Speakers, Attorneys Darlene Bonta and Meredith Lobritz Watts both of Community Legal Aid Services, will present on the topic of Housing Rights Advocacy for Victims of Domestic Violence. The program will include an overview of the housing rights the Violence Against Women Act and the Fair Housing Amendments Act afford to victims of domestic violence and their families. For more information, please visit the Fair Housing Contact Service website at www.fairhousingakron.org or call 330-376-6191.

