



Working for Justice in Housing Through Education and Advocacy

For Immediate Release

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Fair Housing Rights Center Settles Familial Status Discrimination Complaint

Pottstown, Pennsylvania – August 6, 2008 - The Fair Housing Rights Center in Southeastern Pennsylvania (FHRC) and Ms. Barbara Kathman/Castle Dream Builders, LLC have agreed to settle a fair housing case based on familial status discrimination.

In 2006, the FHRC, a private non-profit dedicated to ending housing discrimination, received a call from a single mother who alleged that she had been turned away from an opportunity to rent from Ms. Kathman because she had a child. Under federal, state, and local fair housing laws, it is illegal to deny housing on the basis on having children in the home under the age of 18 (familial status). As a result, the FHRC conducted investigation into the rental practices of Ms. Kathman and Castle Dream Builders, LLC, which revealed a pattern and practice of denying housing to families with children. The evidence showed that families with children were being told that the units were too small for more than one person and that there were no other units available. Meanwhile, prospective tenants who did not have children were offered the unit and were also told at length about other units available. In addition, the investigation revealed that the units available were large enough to house more than one person according to local code regulations.

Familial status discrimination has been outlawed under the Fair Housing Act since 1988. Elizabeth Vázquez, Enforcement Coordinator for the FHRC, led the investigation against Ms. Kathman and Castle Dream Builders, LLC. “Families with children suffer financial and emotional burdens when their housing choices are limited”, says Vázquez. “In particular, these discriminatory practices present significant barriers to single women with children, deepening their struggle to find equality in our communities. It is very problematic that after 20 years of federal legislation, single mothers are still being turned away from safe and decent housing because they have children.”

Terms of the settlement include a mandatory fair housing and sensitivity training for the respondents as well as \$3800 in monetary damages.

For more information on fair housing laws please visit us at www.fairhousingrights.org.