A DECADE AT HOME
By DeAnna Eason
As a Senior Counselor at Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), I have looked back on a decade of transitions which has allowed me to bear witness to the evolution of Fair Housing in WNY. When I first started at HOME, our offices were located at 795 Main Street on the third floor of this five-story building. A City of Buffalo workforce housing development, the building had a hodgepodge of different offices with a mix of both nonprofit and commercial businesses and a variety of artists. One of the first major changes that I’ve experienced as an employee was the expansion of our physical space. In June 2019, HOME’s offices on 1542 Main Street were having all extended tenant protections in housing. HSTPA was put in place to address some of the issues tenants were having including longer notices for moving and more protections for evictions and security deposits, which have made a huge impact on tenant justice.

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My role as Senior Counsel has significantly increased in the amount of people I speak with regarding housing discrimination and tenant landlord issues. In June 2019 the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) passed in New York State that extended tenant protections in housing. HSTPA was put in place to address some of the issues tenants were having including longer notices for moving and more protections for evictions and security deposits, which have made a huge impact on tenant justice.

HOME Celebrates Groundbreaking at Main and Ferry
It was a mild, almost balmy, autumn morning. The perfect morning to make the announcement…of this new beginning and break ground for a new HOME project. HOME Celebrates Groundbreaking at Main and Ferry. The snowless, frostless, perfect morning was a welcome arrival into the fall season, a month away from its official arrival. HOME has been in the planning stage of this project for several years. It has been a labor of love and passion, a dream to fruition. For several years HOME dreamt of creating a space that would house not only HOME’s 11 units of energy efficient, barrier-free affordable housing but also HOME’s other programs and services. HOME was ready to take the plunge to make the announcement of this new beginning and break ground for construction.

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My Decade at HOME
As part of this decade in review issue, we chose to look back at an article that appeared in Insight ten years ago, in the final issue of 2009.

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To read more of this or other previous editions of Insight, go to home.org/insight.

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It was a mild, almost balmy, autumn morning. The perfect morning to make the announcement…of this new beginning and break ground for a new HOME project.
To mark the close of the decade, HOME is looking to the past and bright future of its Community Housing Center (CHC), which celebrates its 10-year anniversary in 2020. In honor of this, we spoke to two leaders of the current and incoming generations of our staff, Scott Gahl, who helped oversee the creation of the CHC as a current board member, and Charles E. Colston, our Senior Vice Chair today. HOME’s Community Housing Center (CHC) is a vital part of our organization. It provides valuable housing Choice vouchers recipients money to make big moves necessary in our society. As we head into a new decade, there are many ways to bring discrimination reports to us. But we need your help. By engaging with us, you can continue your way of knowing which is the truth.

As we move into the new year, we have detailed some of the Trump administration’s efforts to make discrimination harder to stop in previous issues of Insight. Now. This is one of the findings of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) in its annual Fair Housing Trends Report. We have been actively fighting discrimination. Of the 31,000+ discrimination complaints since 2008, 27,937 were filed in 2014. By 2018, the number rose to 31,022, and in 2019, it reached 31,202. The rigor with which presidential administrations have enforced the Fair Housing Act has ebbed and flowed over its 50-plus DECADES.

In 2018, the number of complaints rose even more sharply than overall discrimination reports. The past decade has witnessed significant milestones in the fight for fair housing, there is still a great deal of work to be done. Despite that, a more recent case illustrates that the discrimination has not completely disappeared. The settlement agreement was reached to resolve a fair housing complaint filed by HOME and Mr. Donald Morrel with the Western New York State Division of Human Rights, resulting in a probable cause determination. HOME eventually settled the case for various affirmative relief including as required by the consent decree.

Dolton says he works to educate clients about fair housing laws, so that they will know how to protect themselves from being taken advantage of. Changing laws are hard to follow and enforce which is why we should educate the public. Dolton sees room for growth in the CHC program, and has a lot of work to do. Whether it’s helping clients work through evictions or dealing with tenant-landlord disputes, he enjoys helping those in need.

We can do more to fight for fair housing issues. We need to work together. The fight for fair housing is an ongoing struggle, and we need everyone’s help. Together, we can make a difference in our community and beyond. Let’s work together to ensure fair housing for all.

The past decade has witnessed significant milestones in HOME’s fight for fair housing, including several affirmative relief orders. But despite these gains, there are still significant challenges that sometimes it is not that easy, but with your friends and family, it is. The case was filed with the New York State Division of Human Rights, resulting in a probable cause determination. HOME eventually settled the case for various affirmative relief including affirmative relief including

Source of income discrimination may be one of the most prevalent forms of housing discrimination in our region. Worse still, this form of bias is often a proxy for housing discrimination based on other characteristics such as race, disability, familial status, and military status. In the past decade, there have been several notable cases that have dealt with source of income discrimination. In 2011, HOME and Naima Stewart won a landmark decision in the fair housing complaint filed under the City of Buffalo Fair Housing Ordinance, which prohibits discrimination based on familial status.

By Chris Allaire

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