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Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan
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HASTINGS MOM SETTLES FAMILIAL STATUS DISCRIMINATION CLAIM

HASTINGS, MICHIGAN — Lori Parish of Hastings, Michigan settled her housing discrimination administrative claim, based on familial status, against landlord Marilee Ayles, with assistance from the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan (FHC). Familial Status is the presence of minor children in a household, and is a federally protected status in housing.

Ms. Parish contacted the Fair Housing Center in March of 2012 to report that she was denied the opportunity to rent a unit. She was shown an apartment unit above a storefront in Nashville, Michigan, but after the landlord discovered Ms. Parish had a 15-year-old son, she denied Ms. Parish the opportunity to rent the unit.

FHC staff met with Ms. Parish in April 2012, to discuss her options. Ms. Parish elected to file an administrative complaint with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD transferred the complaint, and it was investigated locally by the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights found a posting in the storefront by the landlord prohibiting children. As a result, the Fair Housing Center sent testers who acted as potential home seekers and reported their experiences to FHC staff.

The terms of the settlement include reimbursement by Ms. Ayles to Ms. Parish for the expenses incurred after the denial. Also, Ms. Ayles and her agents must attend fair housing training.

Fair Housing gives everyone the right to live where they choose regardless of familial status or other protected status, like race, color, national origin, disability, sex, religion, age and marital status. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited in HUD-funded or financed properties as well as in several local municipalities including the City of Battle Creek, the City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Township, Oshtemo Township, the City of Saugatuck, and the City of the Village of Douglas.

The Center also provides educational workshops for housing providers and others who would like to learn about their fair housing rights and responsibilities.