



# ON FAIR GROUND

A SEMIANNUAL FAIR HOUSING NEWSLETTER OF THE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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## Disability and Housing

According to HUD, there are more than 3.7 million adults with disabilities and living on federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI). That's almost 140 times the amount of people who live in Lexington! Millions of people with disabilities do not have a safe and affordable place they can call home. Over 1.9 million people remain in public institutions, nursing homes, and unsafe board and care homes. There are more than 640,000 people who are not even counted because they continue to live at home with aging parents whose constant worry is where their adult child will live after they die. People with a disability are almost 3 times as likely as people without a disability to live in households with total incomes of \$15,000 or less. Did you know that 1.4 million adults with disabilities receiving SSI had 'worst case' housing needs? Only 7% of people with disabilities in the U.S. are homeowners.

For people with disabilities to live independently in the community, they need decent, safe and affordable housing as well as access to the necessary supports and services. For far too many people, individuals with disabilities means residing in segregated or subsidized housing. There seems to be continu-

ing issues with connecting those qualified persons with disabilities who need housing and housing providers who have housing available.

People with disabilities often face additional obstacles in their attempt to secure adequate housing. For example, low-income levels may exclude them from access to mortgage loans or render rental payments unaffordable. The cost of modifications to make housing fully accessible and useable may be prohibitive. Even if housing can be found, designers, contractors and rehabilitation professionals skilled in barrier-free and universal design may not be available.

Two approaches for addressing these issues have been developed. The first is Visitability. Visitability is a concept that asks developers to incorporate three basic features into all homes they build. These features include at least one no-step entrance, a bathroom on the first floor big enough that someone can enter using a wheelchair and close the door, and doors and hallways on the first floor wide enough to navigate a wheelchair through. Should these requirements be taken into account from the beginning of construc-

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## Realtor Community Housing Foundation

The Realtor Community Housing Foundation (Housing Foundation) is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt nonprofit agency that was started in 1992 by the Lexington-Bluegrass Association of Realtors (LBAR) and concerned community members.

The Housing Foundation programs include:

- Repair Affair - a partnership with the

Remodelers Council of the Home Builders Association of Lexington (HBAL) that provides exterior home repairs for low-income elderly homeowners

- Remodeling for Access and Mobility Program (RAMP) - building accessible ramps for persons with disabilities
- Emergency Program - emergency related home repairs for low-income elderly

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# FY2008 First Quarter Summary

## Compliance

During the First Quarter of FY2008, the staff received eight (8) new housing complaints to investigate. Staff closed eight (8) housing complaints, two (2) with monetary benefits totaling \$3,750 for the complainants.

## Community Relations

During the First Quarter of FY2008, the staff attended eleven (11) community meetings or events related to fair housing, attended five(3) housing related training sessions and conducted four (4) training sessions for community groups and housing providers. Staff also conducted three (3) site visits during the period.

### Disability and Housing *continued from pg. 1*

tion the total cost estimated of compliance is \$200 or less for a single family home.

The second approach is known as Universal Design. The concept of universal design is to increase the supply of accessible housing by including as many universal features in as many houses as possible so that the housing is accessible to the broadest number of people as possible. Some examples would include installing standard electrical receptacles higher than usual above the floor so they are in reach of eve-

ryone, selecting wider doors, making flat entrances, and installing handles for doors and drawers that require no gripping or twisting to operate.

Application of universal design principles minimizes the need for assistive technology, results in products compatible with assistive technology, and makes products more usable by everyone, not just people with disabilities.

For more information on disability and housing, contact the Commission at: (859)252-4931; Fax/TDD: (859)252-7057; Email: lfuchrc@qx.net or visit our web site [www.lfuchrc.org](http://www.lfuchrc.org)

### RCHF *continued from pg. 1*

homeowners

- Virginia Place -assisting graduates of the single-parent facility to become first-time homeowners
- Prepare Affair, a new program in partnership with the three Lexington Lowe's Stores' Heroes Program, the Remodelers Council of HBAL, and Shiloh Baptist Church.



The Prepare Affair program's focus is to weatherize the exterior of homes for low-income elderly homeowners in preparation for winter and to provide a workshop for the public on simple weatherization steps to make homes more energy efficient. The workshop will be held at Shiloh Baptist Church on Saturday, October 20, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. To reserve a space or receive more information contact the Realtor Community Housing Foundation at 859-276-2693 or e-mail [RCHF@LBAR.com](mailto:RCHF@LBAR.com)

**For more information on all of the Housing Foundation's programs and services, qualifying for assistance, volunteering for its programs or donating funds or materials please contact:**

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# Housing News

## National Fair Housing Training Academy

Senior Officer Manager Tami Reed, Compliance Director Raymond Sexton and Executive Director William Wharton completed the initial five (5) week course sponsored by the National Fair Housing Academy. The program is a 5-week certification program designed to provide fair housing enforcement staff with knowledge and skills to conduct efficient and timely investigations throughout the country. The National Fair Housing Training Academy (NFHTA) is the educational arm of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO).

NFHTA was established to provide the highest level of professional training for practitioners in the field of civil rights and equal housing opportunity. In addition to establishing your credentials as a civil rights fair housing professional, certification through the Academy offer benefits that include:

- A practical means of assessing your skills and experience.
- The satisfaction of measuring yourself against the highest industry standards.
- Membership in a distinctive peer group made up of your fellow professionals.
- Recognition for your specialized knowledge in varied civil rights specialty areas.
- The opportunity to test your knowledge in a specific area of the profession by earning a proficiency certificate.
- Help in career advancement and compensation.
- For people new to the civil rights field, a starting point for building their professional careers.

The five week curriculum includes study in such course work as Fair Housing Law and Ethics, Critical Thinking and Investigations, Clear Writing Through Critical Thinking, The Psychological Impact of Racial Discrimination, Reasonable Accommodations and Modifications, Discovery Techniques and Evidence, Theories of Proof and Data Analysis, Negotiation Skills and Interviewing Techniques, Standards for Testing Cases, Briefing Techniques for Complaint Investigations, Fair Housing Investigation Review and Application, 1) Writing Cases Using TEAPOTS, Litigating Fair Housing Cases, and the classes conclude with a Comprehensive Test and Essay.

## Commission Staff Updates

Executive Director William D. Wharton announces Supervising Investigator Raymond A. Sexton has been appointed as the Compliance Director. Raymond has been an investigator with the Commission since December of 1997 and most recently served as the Commission's Supervising Investigator since January of 2006. As Compliance Director, Raymond will be responsible for supervision of all the Commission's Investigators and manage the complaint processing systems. The Compliance Director also has responsibilities as the Commission's representative with federal contract agencies and as well design and implement all training programs.



Emily Williams  
Investigator I

Mr. Wharton also announced the appointment of Emily J. Williams as an Investigator with the Human Rights Commission. Emily is a native Lexington having graduated from Lafayette High School including attending Spanish immersion classes from elementary to high school. She is a Business Management graduate from Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. She received her degree in August of 2007. While in college, Emily was a foreign exchange student in Bolivia for one year and a volunteer tutor for children teaching English to first grade native Spanish speakers.



Executive Director William Wharton, Senior Office Manager Tami Reed and Compliance Director Raymond Sexton display their certificates from the National Fair Housing Training Academy.

Congratulations to Raymond and welcome aboard to Emily!



# **SAVE THE DATE!**

## **MARCH 24—26, 2008**

### **Quad State Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Conference**

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission is hosting the 2008 Quad State Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Conference.

For more information or to sign up for our conference mailing list, please visit our web site at [www.lfuchrc.org](http://www.lfuchrc.org)



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