

# COMMUNITY PULSE

YOUR QUARTERLY HOUSING CONNECTION

FAIR HOUSING RESOURCE CENTER OCTOBER 2022



## FAMILY PRIDE NEO

**FAIR HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCE \$7.1 MILLION DOLLAR SETTLEMENT**

**WHAT IS FAIR HOUSING?**

# *Fair Housing Resource Center Inc.*

## *Meet the Team*

The Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization offering several housing programs to benefit residents of Lake County, Ohio. The mission of the Fair Housing Resource Center is to promote equal housing opportunities for all persons and to advocate for fair housing and diversity in Lake and surrounding counties through the education and involvement of the public, governments, and the business community.

FHRC operates a Landlord/Tenant hot-line service for county residents to assist them in protecting their housing rights. FHRC also operates a fair housing intake complaint service for victims of housing discrimination. FHRC is a Housing Counseling agency certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides homeowner counseling such as foreclosure prevention, predatory lending, home financing and repairs.

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Larry Rastatter, Jr.  
City of Mentor

Dean Moore  
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Progressive Land Title Agency

Kelly Faulkner Williams  
Individual

Patricia Denny  
Individual

*Join our  
Board Today!*

Call (440) 392-0147  
for more information!

Contact [Hollie@fhrc.org](mailto:Hollie@fhrc.org)  
for more information on  
Advertising Opportunities in  
our Newsletter!



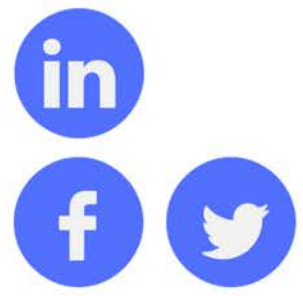


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## **Pandemic Continues to Perpetuate the Housing Crisis**

By: Patricia Kidd

Two years have passed since the initial COVID-19 shelter-in-place order went into effect, yet families across Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula County continue to struggle with housing insecurities. Over the course of the past 12 months, The Fair Housing Resource Center (FHRC), has provided numerous housing services to well over 3,000 individuals and families in need. Nearly 50% of the clients we serviced were either seeking financial assistance with delinquent mortgage payments or past-due rent payments. While many others were pursuing services related to fair housing violations and eviction prevention. As shocking as these numbers are, FHRC believes the effects of the pandemic would have been much worse if the Federal Government did not take action and passed the CARES act. The CARES act has provided millions of individuals and families with vital resources to help prevent homelessness and preserve home ownership. However, many families continue to struggle and face housing insecurities.

The fear of losing your home or not being able to afford rent can be detrimental to one's health and wellbeing. Countless families across Northeast Ohio spend sleepless nights wondering if they will have a place to call home the following day. As rents rise across the country and the cost of homeownership soars, families and individuals are being displaced in record numbers. The average American spends more than 30% of their monthly income on housing, making it difficult to save let alone get ahead in this world.

The news of climbing rents and sky rocketing home prices have left many people feeling hopeless when it comes to their housing. However, like the old saying goes "what goes up must come down." The Federal Reserve continues to raise interest rates, which in turn is cooling the housing market and, in some cases, causing home prices to fall. These effects will eventually trickle down to the average American and cause rents to stabilize and maybe even decrease. However, for the time being FHRC is here to help individuals and families weather this storm and provide a beacon of hope!



## 5 Simple Ways to Improve Your Home This Fall

By: Igor Simunovic

### 1. Refresh Your Home with a New Coat of Paint.

You can give your home a whole new life with fun fall colors, add a splash of orange to your kitchen, or a hint of yellow to a bathroom just one coat of paint can rearrange your reality. This is why painting is the most popular DIY home improvement project. You don't have to be a pro to learn to paint like one, a few videos online and a free weekend will go a long way to bring new life into your old walls

### 2. Refinish Your Old Deck

Don't let your old bleak deck keep you from enjoying a hot pumpkin spice latte while taking in the scents of the season this fall. Years of harsh Northern Ohio weather can take its toll on any deck. If your deck is weather-beaten gray, covered with slimy algae and black leaf stains then it's time for a refinishing project. All you'll need to bring your deck back to life is a few gallons of stain, a pressure washer, and of course some good old-fashioned elbow grease. Before you know you'll be back outside enjoying the weather.

### 3. Rearrange Art or wall decorations

If painting is not your thing, then try rearranging your art or wall décor. There is no better time to dress up your walls than the fall.

### 4. Update your Bathroom Fixtures

Upgrading your bathroom fixtures can change the design and functionality of your bathroom space. Making small a change such as updating the shower head can offer an elegant new look without the designer budget. You can also update your faucets to a bold new design and make your bathroom feel like a five-star resort.

### 5. Upgrade Your Lighting

Replacing old lighting fixtures is another quick and easy way to transform your home. The ambiance of a room is centered around the lighting in the space. The right lighting can set the mood for any occasion from dinner parties to game nights. Try adding Pendant lighting in the kitchen or dining room for a modern look and feel or change the hue of the light bulbs in your living room for a cozier feeling. Lastly, every home needs a statement piece and there is no better way to make a statement than with a bold and beautiful chandler. A chandler should reflect the character of your home and choose something which accents the features of your home.

# EQUALITY

## What is Fair Housing?

By: Hollie Rondini

Fair Housing is the freedom to choose housing free from unlawful discrimination. The federal fair housing act was passed in 1968 to provide protections for individuals to ensure equal access to housing. Let's take it to the basics!

Did you know that everyone is a member of a protected class? A protected class is a group of people who are legally protected from being harmed or harassed by laws, practices, and policies that discriminate against them due to these shared characteristics.

### What are the protected classes?

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation)
- Familial Status
- Disability
- Military Status ( Ohio)

Did you know that States and Cities can have their own protected classes as well? For example, the city of Mentor on the Lake includes marital status.

### So how does this protect people?

Well, it protects people by determining the types of housing that are covered.

The Fair Housing Act covers most housing including single-family homes, apartments, condos, duplexes, and more! It also covers Rentals, Sales, Mortgage Lending, Insurance, and burial plots!

It also takes it a step further to define prohibited acts. These provide an outline for industry professionals to show what they can and cannot do. I have listed a few acts below, but there are many more!

- Refuse to rent or sell housing
- Refuse to negotiate for housing
- Otherwise make housing unavailable
- Set different terms, conditions, or privileges for the sale or rental of a dwelling
- Provide a person with different housing services or facilities
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental

The Fair Housing Act is there to provide protections for individuals in need. Many people do not know they are being discriminated against and it's FHRC's mission to educate our community on fair housing rights! For more information please do not hesitate to contact our office today!

**GEAUGA COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT ON  
AGING**

Geauga County Department on Aging offers assistance with medical bills and prescription medicines. Individuals must meet income guidelines to qualify. This assistance helps in paying for Part A and B deductibles, coinsurance/copays, and premiums.

To apply for assistance, contact a social worker from the Geauga Department on Aging at 440-279-2130.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY  
MENTAL HEALTH &  
RECOVERY SERVICES  
BOARD**

Ashtabula County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board offers disposal locations to drop off unused prescription drugs and pick up Detera drug deactivation Kits for at-home disposal. For more information on pick up and drop off locations, call 440-992-3121 or email [mwalton@ashtabulamhrs.org](mailto:mwalton@ashtabulamhrs.org). Drugs that can be turned in include:

- Controlled Substances
- Non-Controlled Substance Medications
- Vitamins, Syrups, Ointments, Creams, and Lotions, Inhalers

**GEAUGA COUNTY  
TRANSIT**

Geauga County Transit offers an "Elderly & Disabled (E&D) Transit Fare Assistance Program." This program provides fares for transit at half-price for eligible clients. To qualify, seniors must be over the age of 65 and provide documentation of such. Those with mobility or self-care limitations may also qualify.

For more information, contact Geauga County Transit at 440-279-2150 or [webmaster@geaugatransit.org](mailto:webmaster@geaugatransit.org).

# DID YOU KNOW.....?

By: Chris Bowles

**LIFELINE**

Lifeline offers a program to help eligible Lake County residents with the purchase of a car. Applicants must be in an approved school or educational program or be employed to qualify for this program. All participants will complete 10 hours of financial empowerment classes as well as a vehicle asset class. For more information, call 440-251-2781 or email [info@lclifeline.org](mailto:info@lclifeline.org).

**WESTERN RESERVE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION (WRCDC)  
OFFERS**

Western Reserve Community Development Corporation (WRCDC) offers housing rehab programs. There is a general program that covers items such as septic repair, broken windows, and roof repairs. There is also a Mobility assistance program that helps with the installation of ramps, shower modifications, etc. For more information on eligibility, call 440-357-4400.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY  
COMMUNITY ACTION  
AGENCY**

Ashtabula County Community Action Agency offers Audiology and Speech services for all ages. Most insurance is accepted. For more information, call 440-536-4176. This service includes:

- Diagnostic Hearing Tests
- Hearing Screenings
- Hearing Aid Fittings
- Hearing Aid Repairs
- And More!





## Bugs in Your Home

By: Dana Pritschau

The Lake County General Health District receives numerous calls and complaints regarding bed bugs and other insects each year. Where do they come from and what do you do when you find an infestation?

It should be noted that Cleveland Ohio is one of the cities most affected by bed bugs in Ohio. Bed bugs come from other infested areas or from used furniture and they can hitch a ride in luggage, purses, backpacks, or other upholstered surfaces. They can even travel between rooms. These little bugs are extremely difficult to spot and usually by the time you notice a bed bug you more than likely already have an infestation. So now what do you do? Well, if you are a renter the first thing you do is notify the landlord. The landlord is to be notified in writing and you can access a Repair Letter template at the Fair Housing Resource Center website.

Most common chemicals and bug bombs do not work on these tiny pests. Treating the bed bugs is done with high heat, it is the only effective way to exterminate bed bugs and must be done by a professional exterminator. As far as clothing, bedding towels ectara it can be placed in the dryer on a high setting and run for at least 30 minutes to kill the bugs. After extermination, you will want to wash and clean all the surfaces and vacuum your entire home every day for at least four days following the treatment and be sure to reinspect regularly after the treatment.

Keeping your home free of clutter, vacuuming frequently, wash clothes and luggage after traveling, avoid taking in used furniture, and lastly keep your clothes off your bed. The best bed bug defense is a good offense!





# FAMILY PRIDE OF NEO

*Provides mental health services in your comfort zone*

## Who they are:

Family Pride of Northeast Ohio is a nonprofit focused on behavioral health counseling and support services for children, teens, and adults. Their mission is simple: To engage children and families with innovative and professional services in the home and community. Their dedicated staff of therapists and case managers, provide services to individuals across Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties. Services provided by Family Pride include individual, couples, family, and group counseling as well as case management to individuals ages four through adulthood. At Family Pride, they also provide Senior Support Services to help seniors maintain their independence, continue to be self-sufficient, and manage daily stress. Their dedicated team of professionals makes accessing services even easier with flexible scheduling, as well as the convenience of meeting clients in their homes, school, the community, or at one of their offices. If meeting in person is not an option, Family Pride now offers telehealth appointments for those who prefer to access services online.

## What they offer:

For community members looking to improve their mental health through counseling, they offer trauma-informed care provided by clinicians whom all hold a social work, counseling, or chemical dependency license. Their staff can help you set goals and work through issues to achieve optimal mental and emotional health. If you're interested in case management, their Therapeutic Behavioral Services (TBS) Staff can provide practical support by connecting to resources such as housing, food, and employment while teaching skills that empower clients and foster independence. In addition, they offer school-based services, parent education, and free active parenting classes for those with children and teens. Family Pride's collaboration efforts helped create senior support services by partnering with both Lake and Geauga County Department on Aging to help increase the quality of life. They also helped establish the Geauga County Reentry Program to help incarcerated individuals begin transitioning back into the community. If you feel you would benefit from any of their services please call Family Pride directly at 440- 286-1552 or complete a referral form online at [www.familyprideonline.org](http://www.familyprideonline.org)



Guiding **Individuals**. Strengthening **Families**.





## **Buyers Beware Spooky Home Prices May Cause a Market Scare!**

Over the last two years, home prices have soared. Buyers watched in horror as homes that were once obtainable, quickly became a fantasy, toppled with never-ending bidding wars, many buyers have grown tired of the competitive housing market and have put off purchasing a home for the foreseeable future.

The rising interest rates coupled with poor buyer sentiment have knocked the wind out of home sales. This July, home sales were down 5.9% from June and 20.2% from a year ago. This data is reflected nationwide as markets across the US see month-over-month and year-over-year declines according to the National Association of Realtors.

Not only are home sales declining but the average time a home is sitting on the market has increased as well. Last year homes were listed for sale for an average of 37 days but here in the latter half of 2022 new homes are lingering on the market for an average of 42 days, according to realtor.com. National data provided by Black Knight a mortgage data and technology firm also show that home price increases have dropped almost two percent in June 2022, the largest 30-day retraction since the early 1970s.

The combination of lackluster home sales, rising interest rates, and decreasing home prices have begun to shift the market for sellers. Many sellers are fearing they will not be able to sell their homes for their asking price and find an affordable place to live. Therefore, sellers across the country are holding off on listing their homes for sale and opting to watch from the sidelines. Unfortunately, this sentiment may have a negative effect on the housing market as a whole. Homeowners who are opting not to sell their homes are contributing to the housing supply shortage. Which in turn will cause home prices to stay inflated relative to the pre-pandemic prices.

Although the housing forecast may seem bleak for both buyers and seller's experts believe the US economy and housing market are better positioned than they were in 2008 to withstand any headwinds. The consensus is that home sales, prices, and interest rates will return to a more sustainable pace in the near future.

**By: Igor Simunovic**

Dear Housing Hollie,

I am an elderly female living in an apartment complex. My landlord just issued a notice stating that all tenants have to use the online portal to pay rent or report repairs. However, I have no idea how to use the app or computer to pay my rent or report repair issues. I also have medical issues that causes me to be confused easily, and I don't have anyone who can help me. What do I do?

Sincerely,

Scared in the Future

## HOUSING



Dear Scared in the Future,

Did you know that the Fair Housing Act provides protections for individuals with disabilities?

When requested, a housing provider must offer a reasonable accommodation to a tenant who cannot use an online portal due to their disability. A reasonable accommodation is an exception to a policy or a rule.

Inform your landlord that you do not have the capabilities to use the online portal due to your disability and that you would like an accommodation. If this does not work, please reach out to me at 440-390-0147. My staff and I can assist you with making a request to your landlord to allow you to continue to pay rent and report repairs as you have always done!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hollie" with a small heart symbol above the letter 'i'.

Housing Hollie

Dear Housing Hollie,

I am in a year lease agreement. Recently, my landlord has given me a notice that he will be raising the rent in 30 days. Can he do that?

Sincerely,

Locked in for a Year

Dear Locked in for a Year,  
Can he do that? No! It defeats the purpose of a yearly lease agreement. When you sign a yearly lease agreement, a landlord and tenant are agreeing to the terms for 1-year. Therefore, a landlord cannot raise the rent or change the terms of the agreement without permission from both parties.

A landlord cannot raise the rent mid-lease. The only time a landlord can do this is at the end of your lease or if you are on a month-to-month agreement and the landlord provides a 30-day notice.

For assistance call our office today and we can mediate with management to ensure your terms don't

*Hollie*

Sincerely,  
Housing Hollie

**HAPPY HALLOWEEN!**



Dear Housing Hollie,

The temperatures are starting to drop! I live in an apartment complex and it runs on boiler heat. The landlord always refuses to turn on the boiler until it starts to snow! The nights will be dropping to below 60 and it starting to get chilly, can he do this?

Sincerely,  
Autumn Cold

Dear Autumn Cold,

I am sorry to hear about how cold it is getting in your apartment. A lot of apartment complex's still run on boiler heat and it makes it frustrating when you cannot turn up the temperature.

Temperatures are set by the health department. It is said, that if the temperature outside continuously falls below 64 degrees the landlord must consistently keep the temperatures at or above 65 degrees in the unit.

If this happens and your unit does not reach 65 degrees please give us a call and a counselor can help!

*Hollie*

Sincerely,



Housing Hollie  
Do you have a question for Housing Hollie? Write to her at [hollie@fhrc.org](mailto:hollie@fhrc.org)



## Eviction: It Could Happen to You

When tenants contact Fair Housing Resource Center and say “I’m being evicted;” they are scared, confused, and often feel hopeless. And yet, many are not in an eviction, and many have the opportunity to prevent eviction from occurring. Here is what the eviction process actually looks like, and what to do at each stage of the process.

### 1) **Notice. Notice is what your landlord has to provide before they can evict.**

a. **3-Day Notice.** If you owe rent, even for the current month, your landlord can place a Notice to Leave on your door. It will state you have 3 days to leave the premises, it will be signed and dated, and it will generally note the reason for the proposed eviction is “non-payment of rent” or something similar. If you pay the money owed in full before the three days are up, the Landlord cannot evict you. After three days, the landlord can file an eviction. Often landlords will wait longer. Reach out to your landlord and discuss a solution!

b. **30-day Nonrenewal Notice.** This is notice that your lease will not be renewed when it ends. If you have a written lease, the lease may specify longer notice periods. If you are on a month-to-month lease or the lease does not specify, the notice must be provided 30 days or more before the end of the term. The non-renewal just means that the lease ends. After the lease ends, if you remain on the premises, the landlord can post a 3-day notice for “holdover” – that is, staying on the premises past the agreed terms on your lease.

2) **Forcible Entry Complaint.** This is an eviction complaint, filed in the Municipal Court. You will receive a summons in the mail from the Court (not the landlord) and it will contain the actual complaint which alleges to the Court that you have failed to pay rent, violated lease terms, or whatever other reasons exist for the eviction. You will receive notice of a hearing date.

### **What to Do When You Receive the Complaint:**

a. **Don’t Panic!** Call FHRC. We may be able to assist you in negotiating with your landlord about moving out, or even paying and allowing you to stay.

b. **Call Legal Aid.** Legal Aid Society of Cleveland serves Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties. Call them once you receive the service of the complaint. They provide representation to some eviction defendants

c. **Show Up.** If you don’t appear at the eviction hearing, the Court will grant the eviction. If you appear, you can present your case to the judge, question the landlord’s witnesses, and request delays or extensions based on circumstances. Sometimes just showing up is enough to get you farther in discussions with your landlord.

By: Greg Gipson, Staff Attorney

# Budgeting for the Holidays: It Just Makes Cents

By: Chris Bowles

As much as you may not be ready to hear it, the holidays will be here before you know it. Too often, we are living in the now and not thinking about preparing for what is to come, and that often leads us to spiral into money issues, especially around the holidays. Instead of waiting until December to start preparing for all those holiday expenses, set up a budget now, and you will be amazed at how much easier it is to afford the holidays and still manage all your bills at home. Here are some tips and tricks to managing your budget for the holidays.

## 1. Make a Holiday Budget Well Before the Holidays

List out all your holiday-related expenses months ahead of time. It is important that you be as specific as possible. Include stamps, gift wrap, etc. Determine how much you can afford to spend in total and break down that amount into what you will spend it on. Categorize the budget into sections such as food, gifts, travel, and entertainment. Sticking to the plan is going to be your key to success this holiday season.

## 2. Make Travel Plans as Early as Possible

If you plan to travel for the holidays, it's important to book your plans in advance to give yourself more time to save money. Travel can be incredibly expensive, if you aren't going too far, consider making it a road trip instead of flying to save money on travel. If you are traveling, consider using those credit card travel benefits for the holidays. Travel on off-peak days. Look for deals and bundles wherever possible when booking rental cars and hotel stays.

## 3. Review Last Year's Holiday Spending

Take an inventory of how much you spent last year on gifts, travel, food, etc. In doing so, you should try to determine whether all that spending was worthwhile to you. Think about things that could be cut out of that spending when planning for this year's festivities. Buying gifts throughout the year instead of all at once can reduce the pain felt in the wallet in December.

## 4. Earn Rewards

If you are going to spend anyway, you may as well get rewarded for it. Credit cards and store loyalty programs are a great way to get money or credit back for all your spending. Save these rewards up throughout the year and use them for travel or shopping during the holidays. Often, you get money back for doing things you would be doing anyway.

## 5. Homemade is more meaningful

Don't be afraid to make your holiday special in your own ways. This may mean making gifts that come from the heart instead of the store. This also means coming up with cheap alternatives to travel plans. You can have a blast on a staycation with your family that saves a ton of money instead of traveling. Be creative and enjoy your holiday in your own ways.





# Never Stop Paying Rent

By: Greg Gipson, Staff Attorney

You may have been advised by family members or friends when you have a dispute with your landlord “just don’t pay the rent.” Don’t listen! Pay the rent! There are very few exceptions to this rule, discussed below.

Your landlord must provide safe, habitable premises for your dwelling. This means heat and hot water, a way to cook and keep food, wires are properly installed, the floor is intact, and the windows close and open properly. All pretty common sense. If the landlord has provided those things, and one of them breaks, the landlord is responsible for fixing it. The same applies to insect or vermin infestation: The landlord is supposed to fix the problem, as long as you didn’t cause it.

In order to have repairs or remedies to your issue, you have to first tell your landlord. In writing. Be clear and specific about what the problem is, and when it started. Keep a record of all of these communications. If your home is afflicted with an emergency problem – a plague of roaches, an overflowing sewer drain, no heat in the winter, an exposed and live wire, or loss of water – your landlord should act quickly. These are the kinds of problems that prevent your home from being safe and habitable. But you still can’t stop paying rent!

If the landlord is unable to promptly resolve an emergency problem or does not respond at all, you should call the health department (bugs or vermin, mold, lack of hot water or heat) or the building department (live wires, leaks, structural damage) of the city and/or county you live in (in Lake County, there is one County Health Department and many local building departments). If the Health or Building department issues a citation to your landlord requiring immediate repair, or if thirty days pass from the date you notified the landlord about the problem, and it still isn’t fixed, THEN you can...keep paying your rent!

The difference is, that you pay your rent to the municipal court with jurisdiction over your city or town of residence. Willoughby, Painesville, and Mentor are the only Municipal Courts in Lake County, so one of them will have jurisdiction. You take either your communication or the order from the Health or Building Department to the municipal court and file it along with your rent. The court then holds the rent in escrow until the landlord proves that he or she has remedied the issue. The landlord cannot evict you for nonpayment of rent if it was properly paid into escrow, and cannot retaliate against you for doing so.

For more information, consult FHRC.org’s “Landlord Tenant Materials” page for template letters and information about paying rent into escrow. If you stop paying your rent, even if you think it’s for a good reason, your landlord can evict you for nonpayment. Only if you pay the rent into escrow will you be protected from that possibility.




# Fall Clean up Checklist

By: Andrea Bissett

It's that time of year to get your yard ready for winter. The right preparation now will save you time and energy when spring appears and will make sure you get the most out of your yard next year with this following checklist.

- Clean out Debris**  
Fallen leaves and weeds are the perfect places for pests to settle in for the winter. Clear out flower beds to keep the critters at bay. Do leave an area for some fall leaves in your yard as this is a natural habitat for critters that lay their eggs in the leaves, and feed on them as well.
- Clean up the Vegetable Garden**  
After the final harvest, pull out old vegetable plants and remove debris. If you compost, now is the time to add a layer of compost to help nurture your soil for planting next spring. Make sure to dry and save seeds for next year's garden.
- Trim Branches**  
Trim up dead, damaged, or diseased branches you didn't get to in the summer. Prune out-of-place tree branches that may cause trouble during the winter. You don't want any branches breaking and falling during the snowfall to come.
- Clean out the Gutters**  
Not all fall cleanup is in the yard. This is the perfect time to clear leaves and other debris from rain gutters. Check for proper drainage, clear out any blockages with a small garden trowel, and rinse with a hose.
- Dry Everything Out**  
Drain all water from hoses, fountains, and drip irrigation systems, and store them in a dry place. Water left standing over the winter may damage your equipment.
- Rake and Mulch**  
Don't let fallen leaves get the best of you; if left unattended they can suffocate the grass. Rake them up and use them as mulch for young trees, shrubs, and flower beds. You might even be able to skip the raking part if you use a lawn mower to mulch the leaves in your yard.
- Plant Bulbs, Shrubs, and fall Annuals**  
Some plants do best when planted in the fall. If you want to add new shrubs or spring bulbs like hyacinth, now is the time to get them in the ground. Fall annuals like pansies are also a great addition to keep some color in your yard as other plants go to sleep.

If you follow this checklist, you're bound to have a wonderfully winterized yard that will be ready to wow you with lush, green bounty once the warm weather returns







# *Housing Search Program*

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In June the Fair Housing Resource Center introduced a new program called our "Housing Search Program." The program is designed to help individuals and/or families find a home in Lake, Ashtabula, and Geauga Counties, if they meet the program criteria.

The first step is filling out the application which can be found at [FHRC.org](http://FHRC.org). Next, select **Services** and scroll down to the bottom and select **Housing Search Program**, scroll down to the "How to Participate" section, and find the **Application** at the bottom of the page. Once you complete and submit the application, the Housing Case Manager will review it and will contact you within 1-2 weeks to discuss your application and go over the pre-screening questions.

By: Kisha Smith

## **Pre-screening Questions:**

1. Do you have access to the internet for your housing search?
2. Do you have access to a phone for your housing search?
3. Do you have transportation and the capabilities of getting to and from appointments to view places?
4. Do you have difficulties contacting housing providers independently?
5. Do you face any barriers when seeking housing currently?

Depending on your answers we may be able to help.

The program is specifically for individuals who have difficulties finding housing independently. This program is to serve individuals that need assistance with contacting landlords on their behalf, assistance with scheduling unit viewings, and assistance with completing housing applications. Call to see if we can help! 440-392-0147.



# 2022 Fair Housing POSTER CONTEST

## *Unity and Diversity*

Open to all middle and high school  
students in Ashtabula, Lake, and  
Geauga counties

### **Submissions due by:**

November 16, 2022 by 5:00 p.m.

### **Winners announced:**

November 17, 2022

### **Submit Entries:**

Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc.

1100 Mentor Avenue,

Painesville, Oh 44077

P: 440-392-0147

Email: [Hollie@fhrc.org](mailto:Hollie@fhrc.org)

# Halloween Fun - Safely

By: Hollie Rondini

Halloween is a fun and exciting time for kiddos and their parents! Cinnamon spice candles, pumpkin carving, corn mazes, costumes, and trick or treating are some of the many activities individuals look forward to this time of year.

Trick or treating is an age-old tradition that most children in Northeast Ohio participate in. Parents rush home from work to get their little ones in their costumes, fill up their bowls with candy and get ready to sit in the rain or shine to pass out candy to the neighbor kids. However, in all that excitement it is important to remember to keep yourself and your children safe during all the festivities! Below find some tried and true tricks to keeping your children safe this Halloween:

## **Fasten reflective tape to their costumes and bags, or give them glow sticks**

Did you know that children are more than twice as likely to be hit by a car on Halloween than on any other day of the year? Lack of visibility and darkness is the cause of drivers not being able to see the little trick-or-treaters!

## **Choose Halloween makeup over masks**

Have you ever tried on a scary or funny mask at the Halloween store and thought man, this is hard to see in? Now imagine running around after 7:00 p.m. with a mask over your face. Masks often can obscure vision and make it difficult for the wearer to see. Halloween makeup is a great way to celebrate the holiday while keeping you safe.

## **Responsible adults should accompany young children**

As most parents are aware, trick or treating is a game of "where is your kid!" It is important that kids are accompanied during this fun time to ensure in all the excitement kids are still using their safety rules. Remind children of street safety! Remind them to look left and right before crossing a street. Encourage children to stay on sidewalks! Cutting through yards can lead to accidents like clotheslines and other hazards which are hard to spot. Lastly, children and adults are reminded to put electronic devices down, keep their heads up, and walk, don't run. I don't know how many times I have prevented my teenager from walking into something with their head deep in their phone.

Halloween is a magical time of year, and the staff at FHRC hope that all individuals have a happy, fun, and safe Halloween!





## Septic System Care

By: Dana Pritschau

As most of us with Septic systems are aware, there is now an Operations and Maintenance program (O&M) in Lake County that was implemented to ensure all septic systems are monitored for regular maintenance and proper function. This program requires that every owner of a property with a Home Sewage Treatment System obtain and renew an Operations Permit. The permits are tracked by the Lake County General Health District to address neglected or failing systems.

With the idea of yearly inspections in mind, it would be beneficial to think about good septic care. Here are some ways to help assist with your septic maintenance.

### **Inspect and pump your septic system frequently**

Generally, an inspection is completed every 3 years, and typically every 3 to 5 years the tank should be pumped

### **Using your water efficiently**

The more water a household conserves the less water that enters the septic tank. Investing in High-efficiency toilets and showerheads helps limit the amount of water being used in the home and in turn less water in the septic system

- **Properly dispose of waste**

It is important to remember that toilets are not garbage cans and are not meant to flush anything other than human waste and toilet paper

- **Maintain your drain field**

This is the area of your septic that removes the contaminants from the liquid from the septic tank. It is important to not use this area as extra parking or for planting. It is also helpful to keep other drainage systems away from this area



## **Fair Housing Organizations Announce \$7.1 Million Dollar Settlement of Disability Discrimination Claims Against Senior Housing Provider**

Painesville, OH – Today, Painesville-based Fair Housing Resource Center (FHRC) and eleven partner fair housing organizations in six different states announce a settlement has been reached in a federal civil rights lawsuit against a group of developers, owners, investors, and operators of senior housing generally known as the Clover Group. The settlement will improve access for persons with disabilities at 50 senior apartment buildings located across the Northeast and Midwest.

The settlement agreement requires an estimated \$3 million in retrofits to public and common use areas at the properties to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. These include providing accessible routes around the exterior and common use areas, adding additional ramps and curb cuts, and replacing sidewalks that have excessive slopes.

Clover Group will also set aside funds totaling \$3.375 million to pay for modifications to individual units at the request of any resident or applicant at the 50 properties included in the agreement. These modifications to improve access for individuals who use wheelchairs or have other mobility limitations could include replacing sliding doors at patios or balconies to provide a wider opening and lower threshold, providing ramps at patio or balcony doors, adding grab bars, replacing bathroom vanities or sinks, installing roll-in showers or hand-held showers, lowering kitchen countertops, and lowering thermostats and light switches. Current tenants and new applicants will be notified of the availability of funds for unit modifications to meet their needs.

Clover Group will also pay \$750,000 to the fair housing organizations to compensate them for staff time and other resources expended to investigate the alleged accessibility violations and for attorneys' fees. Additionally, any Clover Group employees that are involved in the design and construction of multifamily housing will complete training on the accessibility requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

## **Fair Housing Organizations Announce \$7.1 Million Dollar Settlement ..... Continued**

Under the federal Fair Housing Act's design and construction accessibility requirements, all multi-family housing with four or more units that was built for first occupancy on or after March 13, 1991 must be accessible to wheelchair users and individuals with other physical disabilities. This includes seven technical requirements to ensure compliance, such as accessible routes and sufficient maneuvering space in bathrooms and kitchens.

During a multi-year joint investigation, the fair housing organizations identified issues that they alleged were violations of these requirements and filed a lawsuit in March in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York. Several of the fair housing groups are plaintiffs in a related lawsuit in which the organizations allege that Clover Group entities have engaged in other forms of disability discrimination by refusing to grant reasonable accommodations and imposing a surcharge for units in accessible locations.

In FHRC's service area, which includes Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula Counties, the agreement covers the Heisley Park Senior Apartments. This new-construction senior housing is located in Painesville and is scheduled to open this Fall.

"People with disabilities must have access to housing without architectural barriers if they are to live independently and with dignity," said FHRC's Executive Director, Patricia Kidd. "Reaching this agreement prior to the opening of Heisley Park Senior Apartments will ensure that seniors moving into the facility have resources to accommodate their needs in the present and into the future."

The plaintiffs are represented by the firm Relman Colfax PLLC and CNY Fair Housing Staff Attorneys Conor Kirchner and Casey Weissman-Vermeulen.





# FALL EVENTS

## 2022

OCT  
15

**PAINESVILLE FALL FEST**  
**KIWANIS PARK, PAINESVILLE**

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**3-6PM**

**TRUNK OR TREAT**  
**CENTRAL YMCA -PAINESVILLE**

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**5:30-7:30 PM**

OCT  
25

OCT  
29

**HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST**  
**CRAWL**  
**FARMERS MARKET DOWNTOWN WILLOUGHBY**

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**6-9 PM**



**8TH ANNUAL CHILI COOK OFF**  
**METZENBAUM CENTER-CHESTERLAND**

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**6:30-8:30 PM**

NOV  
4



# NORTHEAST OHIO HOUSING CONFERENCE IT STARTS WITH HOME



**Date:**  
OCT 13 & 14, 2022

**Location:**  
The Lodge at Geneva on the Lake  
4888 N Broadway, Geneva-On-The-Lake, OH 44041

**Register Today:**  
[www.fhrc.org](http://www.fhrc.org)

**Fair Housing Resource Center Inc.**  
1100 Mentor Avenue  
Painesville, Ohio 44077  
P:(440)392-0147  
F:(440)392-0148  
Email: [Info@FHRC.org](mailto:Info@FHRC.org)  
Visit us: [www.FHRC.org](http://www.FHRC.org)

**Contact us for  
More information**

