

Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches Wins Major Victory in Federal Lawsuit Against Housing Providers in Western Palm Beach County

The Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches (FHC) has won a major victory in a federal lawsuit against one of the largest private housing providers in the Glades area of Palm Beach County. A Federal judge has granted the plaintiffs' motion for summary judgment in a Fair Housing Act claim against an apartment complex attempting to rid itself of all families with children.

The Court ruled that the actions taken by Alston Management and Matthew 25 Ministries to force families with children to leave violated three separate provisions of the federal Fair Housing Act and entered liability in favor of the seven Plaintiff families and the Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches.

The lawsuit followed an FHC investigation of complaints, alleging that, in callous and reckless disregard of the fair housing rights of tenants, Alston Management delivered a cruel early Christmas present to the families with children living in the Pelican Lakes complex in Pahokee. In the weeks before Christmas, tenants received a notice stating:

"IF YOU HAVE CHILDREN LIVING OR STAYING IN THE APARTMENT UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS OLD, YOU WILL HAVE TO VACATE THE PROPERTY BEFORE JANUARY 1ST, 2009. "

"IF YOU REFUSE TO MOVE OR COMPLY WITH THE NEW OWNERS WE WILL EVICT YOU IMMEDIATELY"

In response to the notice and pressure by the landlord and the prison ministry, which was interested in renting to sex offenders (who could not live close to a school bus stop used by children in the complex), the seven Plaintiff families (as well as other families with children) moved out of Pelican Lake .

The suit was filed in September of 2010. Vince Larkins, FHC President/CEO, stated at the time that "this is one of the worst cases of housing discrimination against families with children in recent memory." The plaintiffs are represented by Reed Colfax, Esq. a partner in the law firm of Relman, Dane & Colfax, and James Curry, Esq.

Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches
www.fairhousingflorida.com