

Newsletter

METROPOLITAN
HOUSING
COALITION
LOUISVILLE KY
NOV-DEC 2005

Our director reports ...

State of Housing in Metro Louisville

by Cathy Hinko

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans, the Brookings Institution published *Katrina's Window: Confronting Concentrated Poverty Across America*, which focused on concentrated urban poverty — the segregation of poor families into extremely distressed neighborhoods. Pre-merger Louisville was the third worst city for concentration of people in extreme-

poverty neighborhoods. The measurements of fair and affordable housing in the *2005 State of Metropolitan Housing Report* quantify the long road that our community has to fully realize the melting pot of equal opportunity that our country values.

"A large and growing body of research shows that high-poverty neighborhoods serve to limit the life chances of

The creation of meaningful affordable housing opportunities throughout the new merged city is not only a just policy, it is a wise policy and an investment into a thriving future for our community."

people living within them, above and beyond what their own personal circumstances would dictate" (*Katrina's Window*, page 5). In Kentucky, where our population pyramid has become a population cylinder, it is important to invest in our younger generations or we will suffer the consequences of a diminishing work force. The creation of meaningful affordable housing opportunities throughout the new merged city is not only a just policy, it is a wise policy and an investment into a thriving future for our community.

Post-merger Louisville Metro has engaged in gathering data and expert opin-

ions, ranging from the Brookings Institution report, *Beyond Merger*, to convening a HUD College of Experts to study our housing programs. Louisville Metro recently gathered a representative group for the Mayor's Housing Policy Advisory Team, which created the soon to be published *Comprehensive Housing Strategy* for Louisville Metro.

We are at the point when all this hard work must translate into action to follow the strategies. MHC members continue to be a strong voice in this process. For instance, in this newsletter you will read about the work MHC is engaged in with our partners, including Louisville Metro, to create a local affordable housing trust fund. Over the next year you will be called upon to help work on these issues. MHC accomplishes all our work through you and your support.

To view the MHC report in full, visit www.metropolitanhousing.org and to view the *Katrina's Window* study, visit www.brookings.org.

Welcome new members

MHC welcomes and thanks new organizational members: **The Kling Center**, with delegate **Michelle List**; member **Semonin Realtors**, with delegate **Brad DeVries**; member NWNA with delegate **Beth Cross Rose**; and individual members **Nancy Gall-Clayton & Jan Morris, Adam & Denise Ruiz, Kevin Dunlap, Darryl Owens, Beverly & Gerald Moore, Graham & Martha Cooke, Garrett & Lane Adams, Virginia & James Woodward, Bobby Shore, Dawn Jenkins & Carol Kraemer, Alan Bryant, and Kenny & Anne Lanham.**

Metropolitan Housing Coalition

P.O. Box 4533 • Louisville, KY 40204-4533
PHONE (502) 584-6858 • FAX (502) 452-6718



MHC Member News

Here's what some of our member organizations are doing!

Habitat for Humanity's ReStore is open! Shop for surplus and gently used furniture, appliances, tools, and building materials at deep discounts. ReStore is a great place to furnish an apartment or purchase supplies for a do-it-yourself project. ReStore is located at 2777 S. Floyd, across from Gate #1 of Papa John's Stadium. Call 636-2419 for information.

On Wednesday, November 30, **House of Ruth** will have their ninth annual Dining Out For Life. Dine at one of many participating local restaurants and a generous portion of your bill will benefit HIV/AIDS services for Glade House managed by House of Ruth. Call House of Ruth at 587-5080 or visit www.diningoutforlife.com for a complete list of participating restaurants.

Join **Kentucky Jobs with Justice** to elect the 2005 Grinch of the Year on Thursday, December 8 at the Clifton Center from 6:30 to 8pm. The Grinch of the Year is awarded to the most heinous violators of workers' rights and is the only election in town where results can be bought and no one goes to jail. Tickets are \$5 for five votes and available by calling JWJ at 625-3724.

The **Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission** is having its tenth Annual Race and Relations Conference, *A Decade of Diversity*, on Wednesday, January 11, 2006 at the Muhammad Ali Center from 9am to 2pm. The keynote luncheon speaker is Harvard Law pro-

fessor, legal theorist, and author Charles Ogletree. Registration deadline is January 4, 2006. For more information on pricing and details, call 574-3631.

The **U of L School of Urban and Public Affairs**, in cooperation with MHC's **Nonprofit Housing Alliance** and the **Center for Neighborhoods**, will offer two more training programs through May 2006. The eight-week courses, including topics such as *Management of Nonprofit Housing Organizations* and *How to Do Nonprofit Housing Development*, are free of charge as space permits. For registration information, contact Patty Sarley at UL at (502) 852-7914 or plclea01@gwise.louisville.edu.

Support the work of **Women In Transition**, a dynamic organization led by poor people, and purchase a \$5 coupon for Holiday Pictures. Your \$5 covers the sitting fee and one 10"x13" picture. WOW! Pictures will be taken on December 3 and will be returned to you in time for the holidays. If you have questions or want to purchase a coupon, call Jennifer at 298-0462.

Right to Work legislation misleading

In 2005, the "Kentucky Right to Work Act" was pre-filed in the state legislature. It strikes down the obligation a worker has to join a trade union, even in a previously unionized industry or a unionized place of employment. It also allows workers to resign from unions at any time and nullifies all current union contracts.

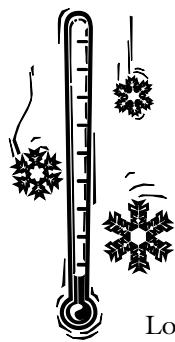
However, if an employee resigns from the union and no longer pays dues, the employer must still offer them all benefits gained through the union's collective bargaining process, such as increased wages, health insurance, and pensions. The union is also required to represent all non-union employees in the bargaining process. Thus, despite its name, the bill effectively weakens the process of collective bargaining with employers for better conditions.

Educate yourself about what Right to Work really means for workers in Kentucky by visiting www.kywj.org. 

We thank our sponsors

Thank you to the **IN-KY Regional Council of Carpenters** for sponsoring our first Community Leaders Breakfast on Nov. 10. We send another big thank you to **PNC Bank, Metro United Way** and **Louisville Community Development Bank** for sponsoring this year's *State of Metropolitan Housing Report*. Your support of MHC is much appreciated.

Utilities costs pinch the working poor



Utility costs are on the rise. While that may not be a surprise to some, it will be devastating to thousands of Louisville families this winter. Despite a 46% increase in natural gas costs in Metro Louisville this winter, the federal government did not increase the budget for the Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program.

Local increases in natural gas and water costs reflect a trend throughout the nation. A typical Louisville customer who spreads payments over 12 months will pay about \$129 monthly, up from \$88 a year ago.

At MHC, we know that a family's ability to pay their utilities affects their ability to remain in safe and decent housing. It also dictates whether that home remains affordable through the coldest winter months, January through March.

There are things you can do to help:

1. Donate to Winterhelp on your monthly bill! LG&E gives \$2 for every \$1 donated by community residents to Community Winterhelp, Inc. this winter. Winterhelp is a nonprofit organization that addresses needs of those at 200% of poverty level. Winterhelp thus reaches those that are not poor enough to access LIHEAP, but need help to make ends meet.

2. Call your Senators, McConnell and Bunning, and Representative Northup and request that they support an increase in the federal LIHEAP budget.

Call 574-1157 for more information about these assistance programs. Let's keep our local families safe and warm in their own homes this winter season! ☃

Affordable Housing Trust Fund News

NATIONAL NEWS

On October 26, the Federal House of Representatives passed House Bill 1461 to create a National Housing Trust Fund! However, none of the Kentucky delegation voted for the bill.

While advocates are excited about the opportunity, the bill contains unnecessarily prohibitive language. It restricts organizations that do any form of voter registration and organizations that do not have a mission specifically to build affordable housing (such as churches) from receiving funds. The Bill is currently being debated in the Senate. Two representatives recently introduced H.R.4231, in which the prohibitive language is removed.

Thank you to all of our MHC members who made phone calls during last month's Call to Action surrounding this issue. We will need your busy fingers again when 1461 comes up for a vote in the Senate. **THE MESSAGE: Support and pass H.R. 4231 to create the National Housing Trust Fund or remove the above mentioned language from 1461!**

STATE NEWS

The **Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky** is working tirelessly to advocate for a dedicated source of revenue for the State Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The state trust fund is already in

operation, well-managed by the **Kentucky Housing Corporation**, but it lacks a dedicated source of public revenue to fund it. And at \$3 million, its funding level is well below the state need. To join the effort or get more information, please visit www.hhck.org.

LOCAL NEWS

A group of advocates from MHC's Affordable Housing Trust Fund group had an excellent meeting with **Mayor Abramson** and the leaders of the **Metro Louisville Housing and Community Development Department** last week. They were extremely supportive of the three major principles of the campaign:

1. The trust fund should be controlled locally by a decision-making board that guarantees consumer and advocate representation.
2. The trust fund should be mandated to serve the lowest-income population.
3. The trust fund should be funded through a dedicated, ongoing public revenue source.

Mayor Abramson will continue working with our group to hammer out details for the next phase of the movement. Our group will continue to seek endorsements from area organizations, businesses and other entities. For more information, contact Nancy Reinhart at 584-6858. ☃

Want to receive MHC's newsletter by email?

If you would like to receive MHC's newsletter by email only, contact Nancy Reinhart at (502) 584-6858 or you can email her at nancy@metropolitanhousing.org.





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P.O. Box 4533
LOUISVILLE, KY 40204-4533

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HIGHLIGHTS FOR NOVEMBER &

DECEMBER ... State of Housing in Metro
Louisville/Welcome New Members/MHC Member
News/Right to Work Legislation Misleading/Utilities
Costs Pinch the Working Poor/Affordable Housing
Trust Fund News/FY 2006 Budget Update/
Upcoming Meetings

*MHC's monthly newsletter is
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FY2006 Budget Update

MHC supports the Senate bill version of the HUD Appropriations over the House bill. Both are still in committee and we will keep you informed as the process continues.

Be aware that last minute cuts are often proposed, so continue to stay informed via our newsletter and website, www.metropolitanhousing.org.

Thanks to the hard work of advocates, the house did not slash funding to the food stamp program. We will keep you informed, as this issue may arise for discussion again. Unfortunately, the Medicare program is facing significant cuts. Both of these services are essential supports to the constituencies for which MHC advocates- the working poor and the homeless. 

Upcoming Meetings

12/7/05 — MHC Board Meeting,

Wednesday Dec. 7, 12pm, Jewish Family and Vocational Services, 3587 Dutchmans Lane

12/14 /05 — Advocacy and Education

Committee, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 3:30 pm, New Directions Housing Corporation, 1000 E. Liberty

12/15/05 — Non-profit Housing

Alliance, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2pm, New Directions

1/5/06 — Fair Housing Meeting,

Thursday, January 5, 1pm, Louisville Urban League