



We Fight Housing Discrimination. We Strengthen Communities.

For Immediate Release

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Regional Real Estate Company Settles Fair Housing Suit For Denial of Service Animals

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – January 15, 2010 - The Fair Housing Rights Center in Southeastern Pennsylvania (FHRC), a private non-profit organization dedicated to ending housing discrimination, has settled a fair housing suit against Michael Singer Real Estate. Michael Singer Real Estate is a management company that owns and operates rental sites throughout Philadelphia and Montgomery counties. After extensive investigation that was conducted over the course of one year, the FHRC found violations of the reasonable accommodation provisions of federal and state fair housing laws.

The federal Fair Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination based on disability in housing-related transactions, mandates that people with disabilities who use service animals must be granted a reasonable accommodation to “no pets” policies. This is to ensure that people with disabilities that require service animals have the same housing options as everyone else.

In 2008, the FHRC uncovered discriminatory practices when a tester was told that Michael Singer Real Estate management would not waive their “No Dogs” policy for someone who had a service animal. As a result, the Center stepped up its investigation and conducted numerous tests at varying Michael Singer Real Estate properties. Test results showed that multiple agents and multiple sites had a policy and practice of denying service animals, including seeing-eye dogs, seizure alert dogs, hearing impaired dogs, and emotional support dogs.

“The indignities that people living with disabilities suffer at the hands of uncooperative housing providers are unconscionable”, says Executive Director, Angela McIver. “The federal Fair Housing Act was amended in 1988 to include disability yet this housing provider’s staff acted without any regard for the law. This case is a reminder as to why fair housing organizations must receive ongoing funding so that we can work vigilantly to help enforce discriminatory actions in housing against persons living with disabilities.”

Michael Singer Real Estate agreed to change its policy, receive fair housing training, provide educational materials on reasonable accommodations to existing and future tenants, as well as reimburse the Center for costs expended during investigation in the amount of \$10,000.

For more information on fair housing laws please visit us at www.fairhousingrights.org.