



Lawyers' Committee
for Better Housing
Advocating for Chicago Tenants

2010 Annual Report

Celebrating 30 Years

Dear Friends:

Lawyers' Committee passed a milestone anniversary in 2010 – 30 years of standing up for and with tenants in Chicago. The organization celebrated with an Anniversary Reception in October, taking a brief timeout to review the agency's history, reflect on the good work that has been done and the thousands of tenant families who have been assisted.

For most of the year, it was business as usual. From tending the day-to-day work of representing tenants in evictions court and residents in building court, to filing restraining orders against unscrupulous landlord “lockouts” and defending their tenants' right to proper notification of foreclosure. These are just some of the routine types of cases that LCBH handles in the course of a regular week or month. Not the most glamorous of cases, not the type of headline case that a large law firm or corporation features on its annual pro bono report, but important work that makes a real difference in the lives of individuals and families. Someone like Cassandra, who is featured in this report, faces a serious crisis when their housing is threatened. This is an example of the type of success our attorneys secure for our clients using a holistic approach that we offer to them through the collaboration of legal and supportive services.



LCBH fills an important niche in the legal aid community and has resisted expanding in to other legal areas. There have always been more tenants needing our help than we can serve, so it has never made sense to veer away from our core mission. One important addition for our legal clients is case management, offered through our Supportive Services Department. This was added in 2002 and at the time was seen as innovative; now a number of legal organizations have added such a service.

This Annual Report highlights events in 2010 and provides a snapshot of the value LCBH provides to tenants in Chicago. With talented and dedicated staff and Board, generous volunteers, and the support of the legal community, City Departments, numerous foundations and corporations, LCBH is committed to doing what it does best – leveling the playing field for tenants so that they get a fair shake in the legal system and an opportunity to stabilize their housing situations. LCBH believes that everyone should have a decent place to live. And we will continue to strive for that ideal in our daily representation of tenants and our policy and advocacy positions.

When LCBH celebrates another 30 years, it will be 2040. But it is our fervent hope that there will be less need for our services, not more, at that time.

Tony Hopp
Board President

Kathleen Clark
Executive Director

Mission Statement:

The Lawyers' Committee for Better Housing promotes the rights of tenants to safe, accessible, and affordable housing on a non-discriminatory basis through education, outreach, supportive services, advocacy, and legal representation.

Feature Story

When Cassandra and her family first moved into a second floor unit in the Bronzeville neighborhood, the conditions were bearable, but after her landlord went into foreclosure, the building quickly deteriorated. Cassandra was never notified, but started to suspect the foreclosure because numerous people came to the building trying to collect rent.

Cassandra initially contacted LCBH because some people came to the apartment telling her that they were the new owners and she had to leave immediately. The LCBH Tenants in Foreclosure Intervention Project provided counseling to Cassandra, advising her that while it appeared the building had been lost by the landlord in foreclosure and had been taken over by a bank, it was less clear that the individuals demanding that she leave had any interest in the building. LCBH advised the tenant to demand proof of title, and to contact the police should anyone attempt to illegally remove her. LCBH also outlined the tenant's right under federal law to live out her lease or to at least 90 days notice before she would have to move.



Cassandra Walker and Supportive Services Director, John Paul Beals

Temporary workers from the Putting Illinois to Work program spent the summer of 2010 on our offices. They contacted former clients from our legal programs to survey them on their views of our services. Fifty of the 53 clients interviewed had been at risk of displacement through eviction or foreclosure when they contacted LCBH.

- 100% said they were treated with courtesy by the staff
- 96% would refer others for our services
- 55% received additional time to move and 21% experienced a financial benefit, such as rent waivers, moving expenses, or direct payments
- 67% were in stable housing at the time of the survey
- 74% rated service received from LCBH as excellent; 26% as good

Other problems occurred as drug users and gangbangers hung out on the front porch at all hours. Cassandra contacted LCBH again after the police busted down her door and the outside security door in response to drug activity on the first floor. LCBH investigated title again and determined that the building title had recently transferred to an investor, the same individual who was now attempting to force Cassandra out of the building rather than assume his responsibilities under the lease. LCBH wrote a demand letter to the new landlord to make necessary repairs as provided by Chicago law and to cease and desist pursuing his threats of eviction and attempting to collect rent without notifying the tenant of the change in management and to provide her with at least 90 days to move.

The new owner refused to make the needed repairs to the unit, filed an eviction action, and even improperly filed a Motion for Use and Occupancy demanding rent during the eviction case. LCBH attorneys moved to dismiss the entire matter in that Cassandra had not been properly notified of the change in ownership and therefore could not be evicted for failure to pay rent, and was in fact entitled to 90 days notice.

At the same time, our Supportive Services team found Cassandra and her family a new apartment. Because of LCBH's legal intervention Cassandra was able to save money while her case was being heard in court, and she was able to move without becoming homeless. Our legal and supportive services teams spent time at the building and even brought student media from Northwestern Medill School with them who documented Cassandra's struggles trying to deal with complicated foreclosure issues.

LCBH attorneys negotiated a settlement, with Cassandra being paid \$2,000 in relocation assistance with a complete waiver of back rent. Cassandra and her family have moved to a new apartment that they love where everyone feels more safe and secure.

Dear John Paul Beal and Mark Swartz,

My family and I would like to thank you for a remarkable job you have done in helping us. It is a great honor knowing that it is people like Mr. Beals and Mr. Swartz out there who really cares. During a time of crisis Committee For Better Housing played a major role in the finding of my new place I call home. I can remember quite well of feeling alone and helpless during this foreclosure issue. That day I found Committee for Better Housing, not realizing it but the feelings of being alone and helpless would soon be over because that was when I found my new friends John Paul Beals and Mark Swartz who till this day keeps in touch. I just wish more people knew about such a great organization such as Committee For Better Housing and all the staff members who played a role in helping my family and I with a Happy start in our new place we call home. Thank You! Committee For Better Housing, John Paul Beals, and Mark Swartz,

*Sincerely,
Ms. Cassandra Walker*

Program Updates

The **Attorney of the Day Eviction Defense Program (AOD)** provides legal representation to vulnerable tenants facing eviction. LCBH, through AOD, is a high-volume eviction defense agency for low to moderate-income tenants operating at the Daley Center every day. Tenants who appear in eviction court without legal representation unknowingly face a trial on their first court date with little chance to present their side of the story. Most of these court appearances last about three minutes. LCBH studies show that 95% of unrepresented tenants are evicted on that first date often resulting in just 7-14 days to move. AOD attorneys provide positive results for clients about 85% of the time.

LCBH utilizes volunteer attorneys to greatly expand the number of tenants we can represent. Volunteer attorneys appear in court one morning a month to represent our clients at the court call of the day or represent a client for the entire case, which may be one or more court dates and may culminate in a trial. LCBH also utilizes volunteer attorneys, law students and paralegal interns to assist with client intake, prepare pleadings, provide legal research, and communicate with clients.

In 2010, the AOD program accepted 335 cases directly serving 981 individuals. Volunteer attorneys were in court 197 days, and independently handled 53 cases from start to finish. The LCBH pro bono coordinator trained 48 new volunteers and interns. The AOD team provided \$472,000 in rent saved and damages awarded for our clients in 2010.

The **Tenants in Foreclosure Intervention Project (TFIP)** works to ensure that the laws protecting tenants are upheld throughout the foreclosure process, advocates for the housing stability of its clients, provides information to tenants regarding their rights during foreclosure and aids in the preservation of affordable housing throughout Chicago.

The foreclosure crisis continues to plague Chicago and tenants are often the silent victims. A majority of the public focus and available resources has been directed towards homeowners. Tenants residing in foreclosed buildings often have no idea a foreclosure is in progress until utilities are shut-off, the owner disappears, or perhaps an eviction sign is posted on the door of their apartment demanding they move within seven days or less.

TFIP compiles weekly foreclosure reports utilizing Google Earth to track recent multi-family building foreclosure filings in Chicago. TFIP in turn provides these reports to 17 Chicago Community Areas. These reports provide crucial early warnings of buildings in foreclosure so community-based organizations can determine which buildings are fully occupied and take direct action to evaluate and preserve buildings. TFIP works hand-in-hand with these groups, providing education, counseling, legal advocacy, strategy and representation. The weekly foreclosure reports are posted on our website and can be found at: <http://lcbh.org/programs/tenants-in-foreclosure-intervention-project/>.

In 2010, TFIP conducted 14 workshops for attorneys, counselors and community organizers with a total of 358 attendees. TFIP held 43 tenant workshops or informational sessions with 719 tenants attending the sessions. In 2010, TFIP provided legal representation or other advocacy work in 40 foreclosed buildings and worked with

tenant groups in 18 of those buildings to address the unique concerns of those buildings. TFIP assisted in the preservation of 690 units of affordable housing in Chicago.

The **Affordable Housing Preservation Program (AHPP)** works to maintain the supply of safe, decent and affordable rental housing by providing legal assistance to tenant groups living in unsafe building conditions. This is accomplished by informing tenants of their rights under Chicago's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, negotiating with recalcitrant landlords, and representing tenants in court or administrative hearings. Project staff works with community and tenant groups and the Chicago Department of Buildings to identify at risk multi-unit rental buildings. In 2010, AHPP worked with tenants groups in 33 multi-family buildings impacting 2,450 units. AHPP also provided training on the Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance to 200 tenants.

LCBH's **Fair Housing (FH)** work includes representing clients in housing discrimination cases and heading up the Fair Housing Education Consortium (FHEC), funded by the Chicago Department of Planning and Community Development, to provide fair housing training to housing providers, tenants, community organizations, and the general public. In 2010 FHEC provided 32 fair housing trainings to 573 individuals.

The **Tenant Advocacy Project (TAP)** provides pre-litigation assistance to tenants who are experiencing difficulties with their landlords, either because of poor conditions, lock-outs, utility shutoffs, or other serious issues. The TAP program is run completely by volunteer attorneys, who in 2010, provided 1276 brief services or referrals and provided more substantial advocacy for 110 client families.

LCBH Supportive Services are available to our neediest legal client families. Staff works with tenants to provide them with the tools they need to gain stability in their housing and in their life. They may be given assistance to locate housing, referrals to jobs and training programs, and screening for public benefits. Our aim is for these families to avoid homelessness and achieve stable, long-term housing. In 2010 our supportive services team assisted 90 legal client families to achieve their own personal "service plan" goals developed by the tenant families and our supportive services team to stabilize their housing.

Events of 2010

- **Hearts for Housing:** In March, Kirkland & Ellis generously hosted the most successful Hearts for Housing tournament to date, raising nearly \$25,000 for our programs.
- Our newly formed **Young Professionals Board** held an event, at a Chicago Fire game at Toyota Park. Everyone had a great time at the outing.
- **30th Anniversary and Awards Reception:** Sidley Austin, one of our strongest partners, hosted our anniversary reception with great fanfare. Our guest speaker was Dean Michael Schill from the University of Chicago Law School. The outreach workers of the Metropolitan Tenants received the Barbara Grau Outstanding Housing Advocacy Award for their extraordinary work on behalf of Chicago tenants. We honored Alderman Helen Shiller and the Honorable E. Kenneth Wright for their contributions in the area of affordable housing and tenant rights.

EILEEN MULRENIN, Employee of the Year 2010



Eileen came to LCBH in 2009 as an intern while studying at Roosevelt University's Paralegal Program after earning Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Illinois. After graduating, Eileen was offered a part-time paralegal position and soon was promoted to a full-time paralegal.

Eileen has an exceptional work-ethic, is highly organized and is one of the go-to staff members in the office. Her contributions help LCBH provide quality services to our clients and keep our attorneys well prepared for court each morning. Eileen has some simple advice for working as a paralegal: be flexible and willing to work — understand that sometimes you may have to do things outside of your “job description” but those that do so are remembered and appreciated.

On her time off she likes to explore the arts, spending time in museums, exploring galleries, watching live theater, going to concerts, as well as enjoying great restaurants Chicago has to offer. Whatever she is doing, Eileen has a positive influence on those around her, and she is an invaluable member of the LCBH team.

Changing of the Guard

In 2010 we said hello to two new members who joined our Board of Directors. Brian Thomas of the Whiting Law Group, who has been a long time volunteer and valued member of the LCBH family, was voted on to the Board and has already made significant contributions. We were also fortunate with the addition of Bernadette Freeman of Barrister One, who brings with her experience as an administrative law judge and arbitrator.

Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to two old friends who stepped down from the Board. Ed Malstrom, now retired from the Exelon Corporation, served on our board for 10 years. He was a dedicated board member who was always willing to step up wherever he was needed, whether it was to serve as Board president or

negotiate a lease. He continues to serve as a volunteer on our Finance Committee, and helped ensure a continuing relationship with Exelon by recruiting fellow Exelon lawyer, Jane Park to serve on our Board. We also had to say good-bye to Candace Armstrong, who was with Sidley Austin and opened her own practice in Indiana, where she lives with her husband and son. Candace served as our Assistant Treasurer, and was the youngest member of our Executive Committee.

Highlights of 2010:

- LCBH published its report entitled, “Chicago Apartment Building Foreclosures: *Impact on Tenants*” that garnered much media attention in Chicago. The report found that in 2009 an average of 125 multi-unit rental buildings went into foreclosure every week or 6,560 for the year containing a total of 20,291 rental units. This directly impacted more than 70,000 people, many in Chicago's most vulnerable communities.
- LCBH helped to pass legislation to seal tenant records in cases where evictions were improperly filed, assisting tenants to avoid denial of an apartment due to a prior eviction filing as well as to repair credit records.
- LCBH received an ARRA stimulus grant that enabled LCBH to increase trainings and counselings for tenants in foreclosed buildings.
- LCBH trained over 250 lawyers and other advocates on landlord/tenant law.
- In 2010, LCBH began representing tenants in security deposit cases and coupled with *cy pres* awards, received over \$38,000.00

Plans for 2011:

- Utilize the results of the LCBH Tenants in Foreclosure Intervention report, “Banks Avoid Foreclosure Laws, Uproot Renters: *A Call for Enforcement of Tenant Protections*,” to educate the public and to inform policy makers about the devastating effect of foreclosure on tenants
- Redesign LCBH website.
- Improve program evaluation and metrics. Focus on more field reporting of individual outcomes to capture the stories of our impact within the affordable housing rental community. LCBH will strive to complete a more centralized reporting system for more accurate and efficient evaluation.

2010 Contributors

\$100,000 and Up

City of Chicago
Lawyers Trust Fund of Illinois

\$50,000-\$99,999

City of Chicago
The Chicago Community Trust
Polk Bros Foundation

\$20,000-\$49,999

Chicago Tribune Charities
Chicago Bar Foundation

\$5,000-\$19,999

Brach Brodie Endowment
Charter One Foundation
Eleanor Foundation
Illinois Bar Foundation
Kirkland & Ellis Foundation
Matthew Fisher
Northern Trust Company
Public Interest Law Initiative
Sidley Austin
The Richard H. Driehaus
Foundation
United Way
Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon

\$1,000-\$4,999

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Banner & Witcoff
Brian C. Thomas
Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione
Chicago Foundation for Women
Daniel Edelman
DLA Piper LLC
Edward Malstrom
Exelon Corporation
Gregory Furda
Helm & Wagner
Jenner & Block
John Storino
Latham & Watkins
Mayer Brown
Sharon King
Squire Sanders
Fourth Presbyterian Church of

Chicago
Todd & Susan Maynes
Winnetka Congregational Church

\$500-\$999

Arcelor Mittal
Claire Battle
Kathleen Clark
Sharon King Foundation Trust
Spinak & Babcock
Unity Temple UU Congregation
Waveland Partners

\$250-\$499

Candace Armstrong
CJBS, LLC
Miller, Shakman & Beem
St. Peters Church
Louis DiSanto
Ridgely Jackson

\$100-\$249

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Buonin Contro
Byron Taylor
David Conley
David Levinson
David Seligman
Della Bauserman
Dennis & Linda Myers
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Marie Lindsay
Michael Brody & Elizabeth Ester
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R. Scott & Kimberly Falk
Raymond & Mary Anne Wexler
Robert and Terry Olian
Steven & Catherine Clemens
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Tom Roche
Vicki Vallen Hood
Vito Giovingo

Up to \$99

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Brian and Jennifer Bartley
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Bill Hajiharis
Bonita Sams
Cheryl Lawrence
Cindy Holfreter
Corie E. Walker
Craig D Miller
Denis Frank Murphy
Enpro Assessment Corp
Gaston Armour
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Madelynn J. Hausman
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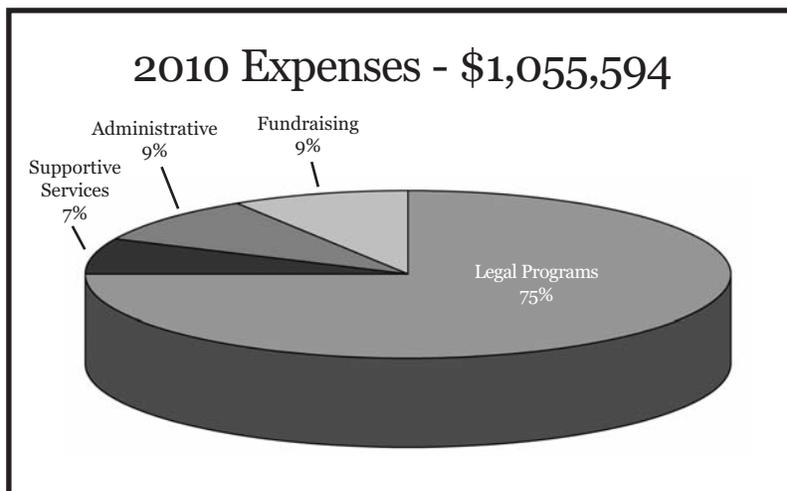
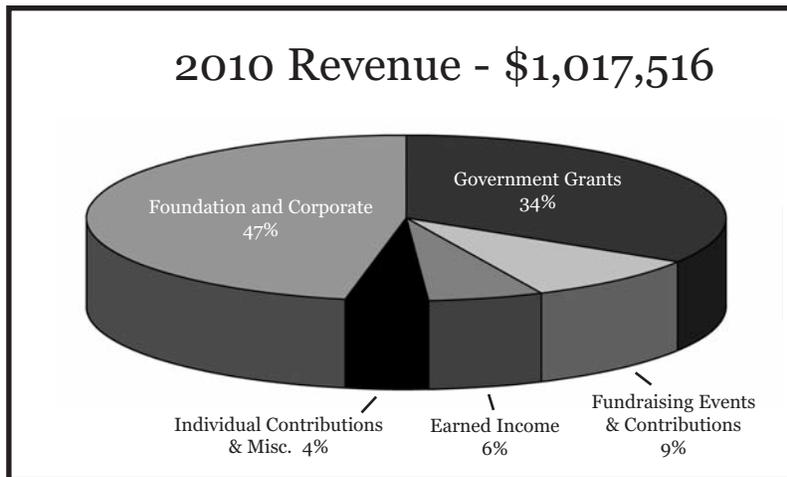
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Vito Giovingo
Deloitte, LLP

Victoria Ogunsanya
Attorney

LCBH would like to thank all 74 of its 2010 interns and volunteers for their incredible work and dedication to our mission!

All persons have a right to access safe, affordable housing and deserve equal access to the judicial process when their rights are not represented. Please renew your commitment today, www.lcbh.org



2010 Attorney of the Day Eviction Defense Program

Program	Rent Waived	\$\$ Awarded	TOTAL
AOD Eviction Defense	\$467,097.03	\$5,250.00	\$472,347.03

2010 LCBH Value of Volunteers

Volunteers	Hours	Price	Estimated Value
Attorneys	5,527 hours	\$250/hour	\$1,381,750
Law Students/Interns	2,735 hours	\$75/hour	\$205,125
Legal Support Volunteers & Interns	340 hours	\$50/hour	\$17,000
Social Service Interns	960 hours	\$50/hour	\$48,000
TOTAL	9,562 hours		\$1,651,875