



**Law Center for
Better Housing**

2024 Gratitude Report

Coming Home



Dear Friend,

What does “home” mean to you?

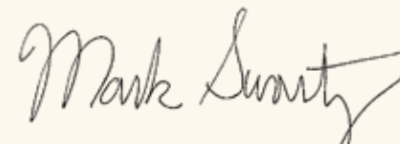
To me, it’s having a place where I can return after work to rest and spend time with family and friends. It also motivates me to lead LCBH’s exceptional attorneys, case managers, and professional staff who believe everyone deserves a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.

This year, LCBH’s free legal and supportive services reached nearly 20,000 Chicago and suburban Cook County households. Our dedicated staff found innovative ways to protect renters from being evicted; they taught landlords and renters about their rights, negotiated settlements inside eviction court, connected renters with emergency rental assistance, and more.

In each instance, we found that protecting “home” almost always meant preserving family well-being and community stability, which doesn’t just serve Chicago’s renters but everyone who lives in our vibrant city.

I hope the following pages inspire you to get involved with our work in and outside of eviction court. Each person’s story is a testament to what’s possible when we all work together to protect every meaning of “home.” Join us!

Sincerely,



Mark Swartz, *Executive Director*

Dalton LCBH Renter

“My apartment isn’t just the place I eat and sleep – it’s where my family began.

Five years ago, my daughter was born in my apartment, and it’s where we’ve lived ever since. I never imagined I’d be in the position to lose such a special place, but when my mom passed away and I lost my job, I fell behind on rent for the first time.

Knowing my housing was at risk, I began researching options to stay in my home. By the time my first court date arrived, I knew I wanted to speak with an attorney.

Aleathea took on my case for extended representation through the Right to Counsel Pilot Program. From the first email, I knew I was in good hands. During an already stressful time, it was great to work with someone who took the time to understand what I wanted to accomplish.

We worked together to apply for court-based emergency rental assistance and compile all the documents I needed to appear in court. I received more than \$10,000 in emergency rental assistance and used my one-time Right to Cure to remain in my home.

When I found out that checks had been sent to my landlord, it was a big monkey off my back. I am so grateful for my attorney and policies like Right to Cure that allowed me to get back on my feet - not just for myself, but for my daughter too.



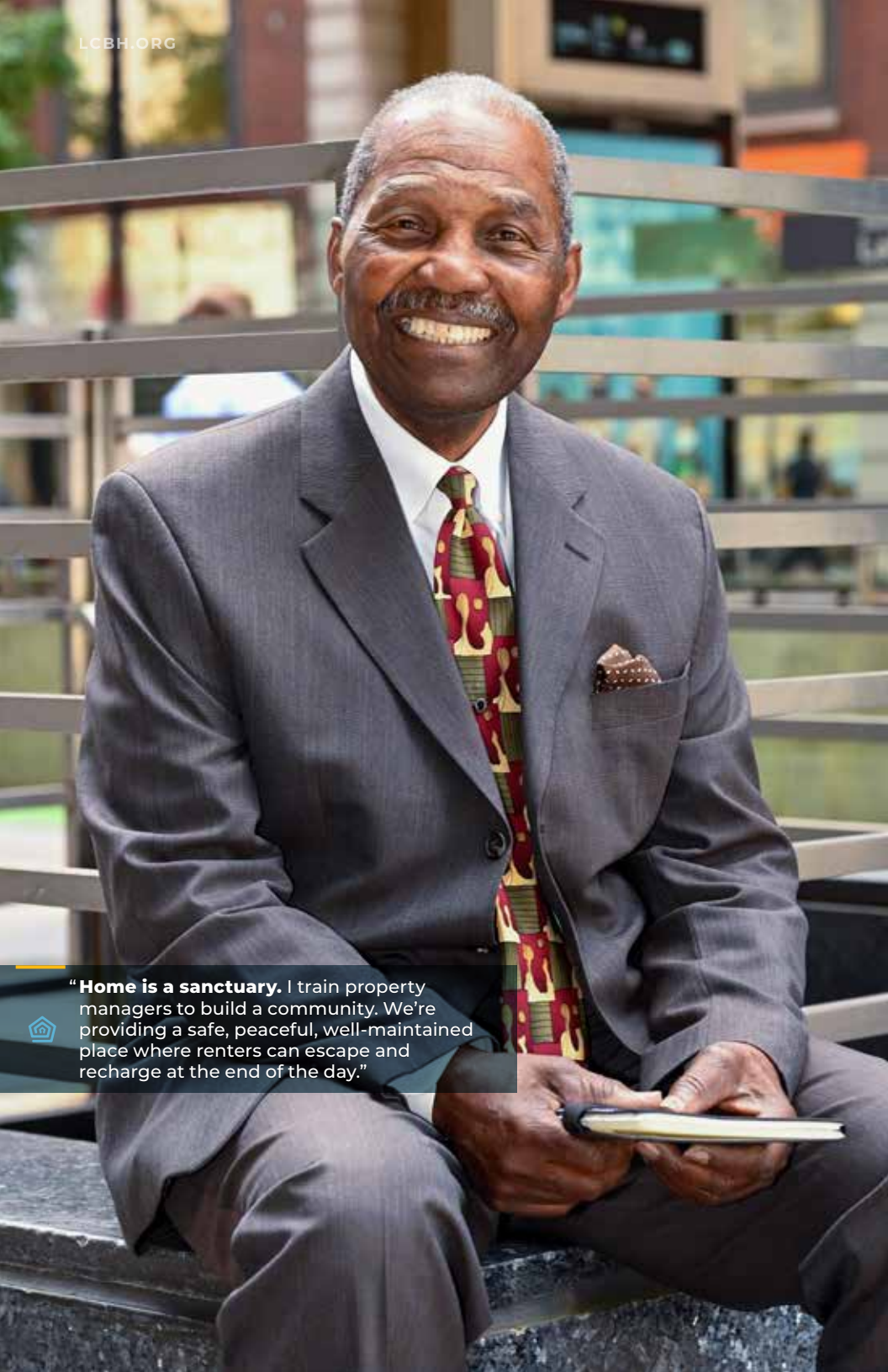
Aleathea Williams, LCBH Staff Attorney

“LCBH helps tenants exercise their Right to Cure by providing legal support and advice at every phase of the eviction process. It’s fulfilling to be able to make someone whole after experiencing hardship and restore their tenancy.”



“Home is where the heart is.
It’s a place to be vulnerable when the
outside world becomes too much.”





“**Home is a sanctuary.** I train property managers to build a community. We’re providing a safe, peaceful, well-maintained place where renters can escape and recharge at the end of the day.”

Taft West *Landlord educator & Property Manager*

My journey in real estate began in the late 1970s.

Over the next three decades, I was fortunate to serve in management roles across many property types, from condominiums to public housing.

As a property manager, I always aimed to treat my tenants with respect and dignity. I collaborated with them to ensure their homes were well-maintained and provided them with opportunities to address issues such as unpaid rent or other lease violations before resorting to eviction.

These experiences informed my work as an educator and policy advocate in Chicago. In 2007, I began serving on the Rents Rights Committee of the Chicago Department of Housing, where I helped train both landlords and tenants on the Chicago Residential Landlord & Tenant Ordinance (RLTO). That’s also where I met Mark Swartz and got involved with the LCBH Board.

I’m proud to see LCBH’s continued support of renters and landlords in eviction court. Today, when a renter goes to court, they have the option to meet with an attorney who can assist them in settling their case with tools like emergency rental assistance. Not only does this help renters stay in their homes, but it also ensures landlords receive rent payments, creating more stability for both groups.



*Gisele Hennings, Housing Director,
Northside Community Resources*

“I learned a lot from Taft that I use in my classes. He was very businesslike and warm. He focused on helping both sides.”

Tony Hopp *Board Member & Volunteer*

“I became involved with the Law Center for Better Housing (LCBH) in 2003 while seeking a meaningful pro bono project.

Reflecting on my values, I realized home and family were most important to me. I was grateful my wife and I could provide a secure home for our three kids, but I knew many in our community, especially children, lacked stable housing. As an LCBH volunteer, and later Board President, I wanted to help families with children preserve their homes.

During the last 21 years, I've worked on many different types of cases, including illegal lockouts where the landlord retaliates against a tenant by changing the locks and dumping a family's belongings on the curb. In these cases, it's important to get tenants a financial judgment that helps them restart their lives. When one renter I represented received funds to move, she told me, “Thanks to you, my children will have a roof over their heads tonight.”

For me, pro bono service is a calling. Having a lawyer evens the playing field and helps tenants to navigate an otherwise confusing and intimidating system. LCBH has given me the opportunity to provide a small measure of assistance to families in crisis.



Brian Thomas, LCBH Donor

“I have had the honor to know Tony over his years of service with LCBH. He is a dedicated husband and father, a fierce advocate for his clients and a loyal and determined supporter of LCBH and the people it serves. I am grateful for his example.”



“Nothing is worse for a child than a feeling of insecurity. **Home is a place where children know they are safe**, and that their family is there to love and protect them.”



OUR IMPACT

5,804

Personalized Advice and Letters from Rentervention

87

Number of Volunteers

\$1,966,322

Financial Benefits Secured (Rent Waived, Relocation Assistance, Rental Assistance)

Amber, LCBH Client:

"I'm just extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a recipient of rental assistance and being able to move forward confidently with a clean slate. It is refreshing to know that there are tools and resources out there to help mediate this process between tenants and the landlords."

Umair, LCBH Supportive Services Case Manager:

"The Supportive Services team works alongside LCBH attorneys to help our most vulnerable community members maintain housing stability. We work hard to help complete applications for rental assistance and assist with housing searches to help stop evictions and avoid homelessness."

4,934

Brief Advice

1,007

Extended Representation

14,767 Renters used LCBH's Chatbot

OUR REACH

OUR CLIENTS

43%

Household member with disability

24%

Incomes below \$20,000

68% Black

13% Latinx

65% Women

Gabby Snedeker, Young Professionals Board Member:

"I'm proud to work with LCBH to leverage AI for good so we can provide timely assistance, streamline our services, and enhance our impact for renters facing eviction. Your support enables us to stay at the forefront of technological advancements, ensuring we can empower Chicago's renters to access their rights."

Your support ensures LCBH can preserve stable, secure, and safe homes for families throughout Chicago.



2023

Operating Revenues	\$7,941,020
Operating Expenses	\$6,928,519
Net Gain/Loss from Operations	\$1,012,501



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