

Letter from the President

The Legacy of Accessing Opportunity

by Demetria McCain

Between the late 1700s and mid-1800s, enslaved Africans traveled through a network of cross-country routes to escape our country's legalized system of chattel slavery in hopes of living as independent human beings. African Americans, most notably Harriet Tubman, and a cadre of bold whites aided in these attempts. Later, in the first half of the Twentieth Century, the country witnessed the Great Migration when millions of African Americans sojourned from the rural south, including Texas, to the Northeast, Midwest and West seeking job opportunities and to escape growing racist violence such as lynching.

In reflecting upon both movements, we see people who wanted something different. We see people traveling from or to what they saw as potentially life changing opportunities. While nothing compares to the escape from America's peculiar institution, it is for potentially life-changing opportunities that ICP's families daily make the choice to move to new communities. Some move upwards of thirty-five miles from poverty-concentrated, racially segregated neighborhoods.

As ICP moves through its second decade of providing housing mobility counseling for low income families and advocating to remove barriers that keep them out of high opportunity areas of the Dallas Metroplex, we forge ahead with mixed feelings. Our efforts of the past ten plus years have: helped create hundreds of rental units in low-poverty, safe neighborhoods with higher performing schools; educated thousands of housing choice voucher holders about their fair housing rights and helped shift policies so these families could access this kind of housing. For this reason, we have celebrated.

As we take on the fair housing challenges of ICP's second decade, we recognize there is a tremendous amount of work to be done. Now is a time when we see demand for affordable housing in high opportunity areas outpacing supply by leaps and bounds. We can credit the discriminatory policies of the past and present for this disequilibrium.

Between now and the few next years, ICP is looking for the sweet spot, a point where housing searchers of all colors, of all ethnicities and of all incomes may choose and access neighborhoods that best fit their families' needs. Join, or rejoin, us as we continue to engage in a way that creates more access to affordable rental housing in high opportunity areas and results in thriving racially and economically inclusive communities throughout the Dallas Metroplex. **#FAIRHOUSINGSWEETSPOT.**