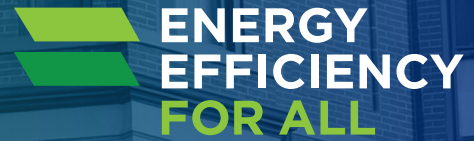


# VOICES OF

## Energy and Housing Affordability



**OWNER:** Community Properties of Ohio

**Affordability:** Section 8 Voucher, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, HOME, Neighborhood Stabilization Program

Imagine yourself tired, hopeless, and homeless. Now imagine that you have a small child beside you. The child is sick. Who do you turn to? Imagine that you have just turned 18 and aged out of the foster care system. Where do you go? For four women in Ohio, they were able to turn to Community Properties of Ohio (CPO) Management Services.

Last summer, two of NRDC's EEFA interns, Brianna Johnson-King and Yuran Chen, went on a cross-country tour of affordable housing to hear the stories of the residents who benefit from federal programs such as LIHTC, rental assistance, WAP, and LIHEAP. While in Ohio, they interviewed four young, hardworking women that represent why assisted housing is so important. At crucial points in their lives, affordable housing was the key to stability and the foundation that enabled each woman to care for their families.

CPO is a tenant-endorsed, community based management company that is dedicated to meeting the needs of residents and the community. Only through the Housing Credit, could CPO rehabilitate 1,300 Section 8 affordable housing units in seven urban neighborhoods.

It is thanks to CPO that Alycia, Adara, Jerri, and Latice now have safe, affordable homes while they work to provide for their families. The short

biographies below come from Brianna's and Yuran's interviews with the working mothers who are all taking advantage of assisted housing to better their own lives, those of their families, and that of the community.

### ALYCIA

Alycia is a single mother of three small children. She first found CPO after she aged out of the foster care system in 2006. After leaving the housing, she returned in 2014. Alycia now has a job and thanks to the assistance provided through federal programs like rental assistance, LIHEAP, and food assistance can help save half of her income to help care for her sons.

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"Affordable housing is having somewhere to get on my feet while I am trying to get through whatever my step is.... Affordable housing is for me to be able to save money to get my life together and to get myself on track in order to be able to go on to whatever is after this."

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## ADARA

Adara is a young mother with a special needs child. Early on, her son needed major brain surgery that required time off work. Adara was fortunate to be a part of the CPO community that supported her during her time of need. She now works as a AmericaCorps volunteer.



“Affordable housing means a chance.

A chance to better yourself.”

“It doesn’t feel like a house. It feels like a home.”

## JERRI

Jerri is a full-time student now, but in 2012 she was one of the many working homeless. With an infant, she was unsure if she would be able to secure housing. Fortunately, CPO was able to find her housing within a few weeks.



“Since I’ve had affordable housing I’ve been able to go to school. It allows me to go to school full time, work a job, and take

care of my child.”

Cutting these programs will mean that a lot of people suffering. It will leave a lot of us out here living on the streets with our kids.”

## LATICE

Latice was scared, pregnant, and homeless before finding CPO housing: “I didn’t know how I was going to take care of [my son], how I was going to provide for him.” Although the mother of three was employed at the time and received both welfare and social security, there simply was not enough money to provide both safe housing and provide for her family. CPO Housing changed everything. “The first apartment I walked into I fell to my knees.... Just step by step things started to happen.” In two short years, Latice has transformed her life. Now working as an Americorps volunteer, Latice says she is overwhelmed with gratitude for her housing. She works hard every day to build a better community for her son.



“It helps me. It helps me to afford diapers and wipes. Sometimes it takes time to climb that ladder.

Not everyone is fortunate to have. It doesn’t put me on the rich list, but... it feels good to have a home.”

If not for affordable housing, at least half of these women and maybe all of them would be on the streets at a far greater cost than the dollar amount spent on building housing like that in Westerville. Protecting the Housing Credit is about protecting families. As Latice said in her interview on what these programs mean to her, “I think about my son. I think about his future. Is he going to be safe?”