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Dining To Put A Dent In Fair Housing Awareness

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Just as bread and butter goes with a good meal, Charmel Gaulden says equal housing opportunities are essential to South Mississippi's recovery.

"When housing becomes limited, fair housing becomes essential," Gaulden said.

That's why Gaulden and the Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center are encouraging people to dine out, to dig in to the importance of housing for everyone.

"When Katrina destroyed rental stock in our community, between 15,000 and 20,000 renters were displaced. Currently the governor's program for small rental assistance only allocated 5,000 units being rebuilt in terms of accepting that assistance. We have a huge need, and just because you see it on the surface, that doesn't mean that everyone is being served," Gaulden said.

Al Fresco Italian Bistro is throwing their assistance into the mix, serving up 15 percent of their proceeds from Monday's sales to the Fair Housing Center.

"That it will catch on really strong, and be fair across the board. Ocean Springs, Biloxi, Gulfport, Pascagoula, where everyone can take advantage of it and it will help everyone in different levels of income," co-manager of Al Fresco Lee Ceccurilli said.

Solving the fair housing crisis isn't easy, but Gaulden says it's a key ingredient to a successful future.

"Where you live, being able to even access housing is so integral to your life, that we feel like it's the necessary part of rebuilding the community here on the coast," Gaulden said.

If you feel you have been unfairly denied housing opportunities, you can contact the Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center at (228) 396-4008.

By Keli Rabon

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