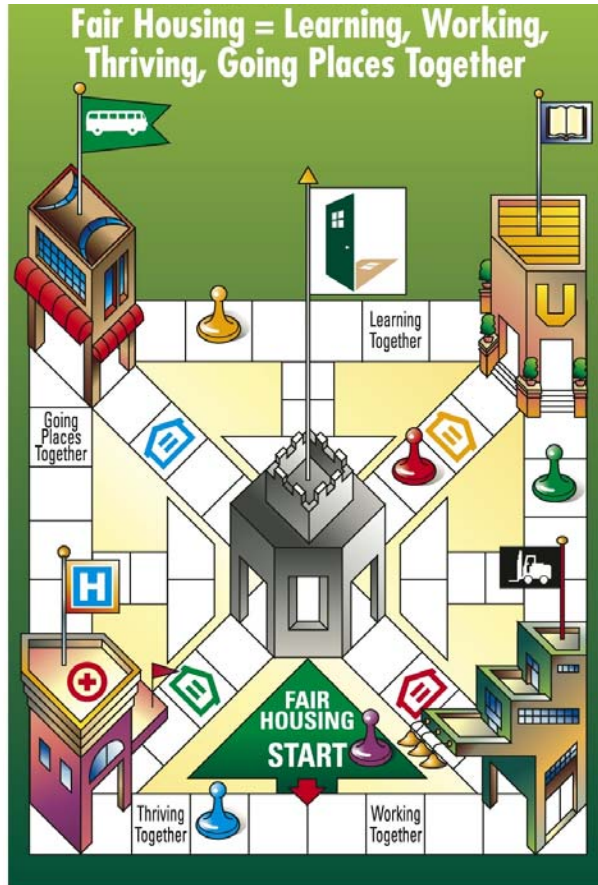




# Fair Housing Center of West Michigan



## 2007 Annual Report



# Table of Contents

Letter from the Executive Director.....	1
About the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan.....	2
20th Annual Luncheon and Workshop Series.....	3
<i>Friends of Fair Housing: Celebrating Images of Hope</i> .....	3
2007 Complaint Data.....	4
2007 Testing Data.....	5
<i>Housing Fair Housing Capital Campaign</i> .....	5
Steelcase Match Grant for Membership Dollars.....	5
2007 Members.....	6



## **Fair Housing Center of West Michigan**

20 Hall Street SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Tel: (616) 451-2980 or 1-866-389-FAIR

Fax: (616) 451-2657

E-mail: [contact-us@fhcwm.org](mailto:contact-us@fhcwm.org)

Website: [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org)



## Letter From the Executive Director

“In the middle of a difficulty lies opportunity” - Albert Einstein

2007 was quite a year for the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan. It was a year of huge obstacles as well as great opportunities. We started the year by completing construction and moving in to our beautiful new space at 20 Hall Street SE—the building having been donated by Chase and the capital raised to renovate coming from partners in the industry, long time supporters of fair housing and new relationships. The building, with its specifically designed features including open work space, storage and a large training room made it possible for the Center to double its capacity for spreading awareness of fair housing and for enforcement. This was the culmination of over three years of planning and hard work and as such, one would think a time of great celebration. While we did take time to appreciate how far we had come, our focus quickly shifted to meeting the increased demand for services, especially in light of shrinking financial support from Kent County, the total lack of federal HUD dollars for 2007 and the largest downturn in the local housing industry that most can remember. In facing these challenges the Center was able to emerge more efficient, more connected, more relevant and more effective, thereby better serving its 11 county service area in West Michigan.

Enforcement continued to be a major activity of the Center. 2007 year end statistics show that complaints of housing discrimination were up by over 4% and evidence was found in a record setting 40% of the investigations conducted by the Center. Thanks to the commitment of the Center's Board of Directors and the support from its members, the Center was able to continue to engage in necessary enforcement activities despite the fact that funding levels for such activity was cut by more than 60% in 2007. Outreach continued to be a major focus of the Center with thousands of people receiving fair housing training and education through its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair Housing Luncheon and Workshop Series, the Lakeshore Fair Housing Breakfast, the quarterly newsletters, industry and social service trainings, just to name a few. These trainings continue to receive exceptional reviews for their quality and relevance.

2007 provided opportunities for new collaborations and partnerships. Efforts to bring fair housing to the Lakeshore area strengthened and will serve as a model for the expansion of service to other communities. The increased space made it possible for the Center to host interns and student volunteers from Aquinas College, Cooley Law School and Grand Valley State University as well as a part-time receptionist through an AARP program. Generous support from the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, Steelcase Foundation and the Frey Foundation enabled the Center to maintain its increased service level and area while at the same time develop a long term strategy for sustainability including an annual giving plan, increased focus on membership and the addition of a fall table hosted event – all of which was met with great success. While not all initiatives submitted for 2007 received funding, the Center was able to make inroads in to new areas. The Center began a contract with the Area Agency on Aging funded through the Kent County Senior Millage to determine the extent to which seniors experience housing discrimination based upon race, national origin and/or disability status and to provide education to increase awareness of that discrimination and compliance with fair housing laws. The Center also embarked on a unique consulting relationship with the Michigan Association of Realtors and its members providing voluntary testing as well as offering risk management fair housing training using the testing results to exemplify the issues.

Thus, while it was a year of challenges, it was a year of incredible growth for the Center. Thanks to a great Board of Directors, an active Lakeshore Advisory Board, a dedicated staff, a committed housing industry and incredible community partners, the Fair Housing Center is now poised to help west Michigan grapple with the complicated issues related to fair housing, thereby making housing choice a reality.

*Nancy L. Haynes*, Executive Director



# About the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

## VISION STATEMENT

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan recognizes the importance of "home" as a component of the American dream and envisions our community free of housing discrimination where equal housing opportunity, access, and choice are enjoyed by all. The Fair Housing Center will be a leading, visible force in preventing and correcting discriminatory practices.

## MISSION

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan's mission is to eliminate practices of housing discrimination and promote diverse, open communities through education and advocacy.

## HISTORY OF THE FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF WEST MICHIGAN

Like most metropolitan areas in the 1970's, Grand Rapids experienced a tremendous amount of "white flight" to the suburbs. As a result, the racial and ethnic composition of many neighborhoods, and subsequently the schools, changed. The Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) recognized the need to integrate their schools. When deciding on a strategy, they concluded that instead of using busing, a markedly unsuccessful method, they would focus on integrating the neighborhoods thereby, the schools.

A committee was formed with representatives from GRPS, Grand Rapids Junior College, Southeast End Neighborhood Association, and the Cities of Grand Rapids and Kentwood. In 1979, the group visited the Fair Housing Center in Detroit where they met with the Board and staff; borrowed and adapted their by-laws and method of operations; and then set up a similar center in Grand Rapids. Using \$1,500 "seed money" from the Dyer -Ives Foundation, the

Fair Housing Center of Greater Grand Rapids was incorporated on September 4, 1980 to:

"support and encourage equal opportunities in the

Greater Grand Rapids area,... provide assistance to individuals pursuing legal rights and remedies related to fair housing, offer housing assistance and counseling, provide community education, promote community involvement, perform research in the area of housing, and promote good working relations with other housing agencies." In 2005, twenty-five years of fair housing service later, the FHC staff and Board of Directors deemed it necessary to expand these services beyond the Greater Grand Rapids area to Kent and 10 surrounding counties. Thus inspiring the transition to the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan.

From various locations and with a small dedicated staff for the past 28 years, the Fair Housing Center has put forth great effort to ensure equal access to housing for all citizens in its service area. In its first year of existence, the Center conducted 130 tests at 105 locations and investigated 21 complaints from area homeseekers, and the numbers continued to rise. From that first year, the Center has never looked back.



## 20th Annual Luncheon and Workshop Series

### Fair Housing = Learning, Working, Thriving, Going Places Together

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan celebrated 20 years of providing high quality fair housing education on April 26, 2007, when it hosted its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series. The Center offered 4 concurrent morning workshops followed by a sold-out luncheon with a keynote presentation by James Carr of the Fannie Mae Foundation. Mr. Carr talked about the foreclosure crisis and the growing income gap, calling for lenders to be more invested in borrowers' success and for more regulation outside of the prime market. According to Mr. Carr, "the foreclosures on the sub-prime market are a crisis like we've never seen before."

The theme behind the event, "*Fair Housing = Learning, Working, Thriving, Going Places Together*," strongly resonated within the community, demonstrated by full workshops and requests for action and more dialogue! The workshops focused on the connections between fair housing and four tough community issues: education, employment, healthcare and transportation. The Education workshop discussed the impact of racial segregation on schools, national testing projects, innovative approaches to the issue and what is happening locally. The Employment workshop discussed the role of residential segregation, national data and information on persistent racial inequality in employment. The Health Care workshop covered the relationship between the health of individuals and families and where they live as well as the severity of health care disparities along racial lines. The Transportation workshop focused on the policies and practices of fair housing in creating economically and racially diverse neighborhoods that are served by transit.

## Friends of Fair Housing: Celebrating Images of Hope

On November 19, 2007, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan held its first table hosted event entitled *Friends of Fair Housing: Celebrating Images of Hope*. This exciting inaugural event took place at the Western Michigan University Graduate Center and drew over 225 attendees! Each successive year a *Friends of Fair Housing* luncheon will be held in order to introduce fair housing to a wider audience and build relationships within the community. This inaugural event kicked off the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act which will be celebrated throughout 2008. The title of the event acknowledged keynote speaker Bernie Kleina's striking photographs which highlighted the Chicago Freedom movement and the fight for fair housing in the 1960s. His photos were displayed throughout both the reception area and the dining room. Mr. Kleina now serves as the Executive Director of the HOPE Fair Housing Center in Wheaton, IL

Another feature of this event is the presentation of the new *Fair Housing Advocate Awards*. The first ever recipients of this award, Lee Nelson Weber and Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers, were honored with a Bernie Kleina photo of Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr. Ms. Nelson Weber is the preceding FHCWM Executive Director and a devoted friend of fair housing. Congressman Ehlers was honored for his longtime commitment to fair housing.

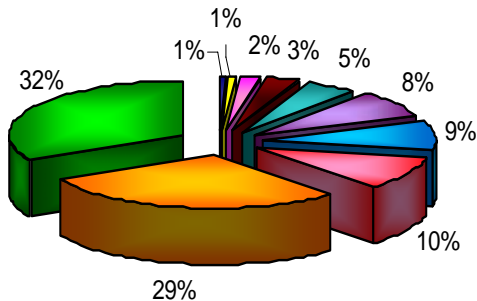


# 2007 Complaint Data

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan received **154** housing discrimination complaints during 2007. Since its inception in 1980, the majority of the Center's complaints each year have been race-based, but this year familial status complaints surpassed the number of race-based complaints. This does not indicate that race was not the most prevalent form of discrimination, but rather that the Center was able to more effectively detect discrimination based on familial status. The following pie chart demonstrates the 2007 complaints by percentage.

Basis	Year	2007	2006	2005	2004
Family Status		51	30	21	17
Race		44	74	61	69
Handicap		16	18	12	13
Age		14	5	6	8
Source of Income		12	4	11	5
National Origin		7	4	16	17
Marital Status		5	6	5	3
Sex		3	4	4	4
Religion		1	1	1	3
Color		1	2	4	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>154</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>139</b>

- Religion 1%
- Color 1%
- Sex 2%
- Marital Status 3%
- National Origin 5%
- Source of Income 8%
- Age 9%
- Handicap 10%
- Race 29%
- Family Status 32%

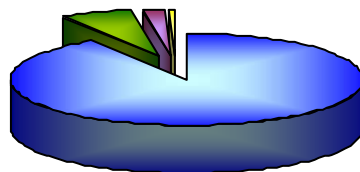


The majority of complaints received annually by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan are related to rental transactions, as demonstrated in the 2007 statistics. The Center continually experiences an increase in rental complaints each year.

Transaction	2007	2006	2005	2004
<b>Rental</b>	140	134	108	115
<b>Sales</b>	10	12	29	16
<b>Mortgage</b>	3	1	3	4
<b>Other</b>	1	1	1	4

2007 Complaint Types

- Rental 91%
- Sales 6%
- Mortgage 2%
- Other 1%



## 2007 Testing Data

During 2007, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan conducted a total of **180** conclusive matched-pair housing tests on the bases of race, source of income, family status and seniors with disabilities. Seventy-two of the 180 tests, or **40%, revealed evidence of housing discrimination.** This is the highest rate of evidence in the Center's 28 year history. Even more startling, of the 141 conclusive tests conducted to detect discrimination based on race, 64 or 45%, revealed evidence. This means that almost one of every two legally protected persons of color who completed a conclusive test based on race was a victim of illegal housing discrimination. The statistics of evidence revealing tests demonstrate the need to address the pervasiveness of housing discrimination as well as to more vehemently promote open, diverse neighborhoods throughout west Michigan.

Basis of Tests	Conclusive Tests	Evidence Tests	Percent Evidence
Race	141	64	45%
Source of Income	5	2	40%
Family Status	12	3	25%
Disability	20	3	15%
Color	1	0	0%
Marital Status	1	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>40%</b>

## Housing Fair Housing Capital Campaign

The Fair Housing Center is continuing its work on the *Housing Fair Housing Capital Campaign*, raising funds to renovate and fully equip its new home, donated by J.P. Morgan Chase, just south of downtown Grand Rapids. To date, the Center and its committed volunteers have raised an astounding \$1,017,566 towards its goal of \$1,250,000! The new facility has already increased the Center's capacity to deliver fair housing education and outreach programming as well as its enforcement activities. The Center, located at 20 Hall Street SE, is much more visible in the community, as evidenced by the ever-increasing number of visitors using the new training space (a bonus for FHCWM members!), the number of drop-in visitors and the high volume of calls coming in every day. The Center continues to fundraise for this campaign, and all donors who give \$100 or more will have their names featured on a beautiful mosaic donor wall in the entryway of the new office.

## Steelcase Match Grant for Membership Dollars

In yet another "big first," the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan was awarded a matching grant for membership dollars from the Steelcase Foundation. With the support of our wonderful members, the Center was able to raise a record total of \$18,052 for its 2007 Membership Drive. The Steelcase Foundation matched dollar for dollar any new memberships and any increased memberships, enabling the Center to meet the challenge of raising an additional \$8,000, thereby more than doubling its annual membership goal! Thank you, Steelcase Foundation!!



# 2007 Supporting, Corporate, Business and Individual Members

## First Ever Supporting Members:

Marilyn Titcher  
Bob & Aleicia Woodrick

## Corporate Members:

Brookmeadow Apartments  
Byron Bank  
Coopers Landing  
Crossroads Apartments  
Crown Pointe Apartments  
Eastern Floral  
Eastland Apartments  
Elzinga Volkers  
Fair Housing Center of Metro Detroit  
Fieldstone Apartments  
Goodrich Quality Theaters  
Grand Haven Bank  
High Pointe Apartments  
John Hunting & Associates  
Land & Company  
Macatawa Bank  
Main Street Savings Bank, FSB  
Medema Consulting Associates  
Michigan Association of Realtors  
North Pointe Apartments 2  
Oakview Apartments  
Parkcrest Apartments  
Peppercorn  
Prairie Creek Apartments  
Red Oak Management Co., Inc.  
SIBSCO  
The W Group  
Wimbledon Apartments, Ltd.  
Woodfield Apartments  
Yesterdog, Inc.  
York Creek #2

## Business Members:

Appraisal Associates, Inc.  
Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan  
Bayberry Pointe Apartments  
Blouw Appraisal Co.  
Buehler Realty, Inc.  
Catholic Social Services/Casa de la Paz  
Charron & Hanisch, PLC  
Community Action House  
Eastown Properties  
First United Methodist Church of Holland

Fishladder, Inc.  
Genesis NonProfit Housing Corp.  
Grand Rapids Community Foundation  
Heartland Builders  
Home Repair Services  
Lola Audu Real Estate, Inc.  
Modern Fire & Security Systems  
Patriot Realty

## Individual Members:

Thomas Appel  
Peter & Glenna Armstrong  
Glenn Barkan  
Debra Barton  
Dave Bee  
Hattie Tinney Beenen  
Michelle Behrenwald  
The Benson Family  
Louis Berra  
Kristin VandenBerg & Donald Bessey  
Guy & Kim Bickford  
Nancy Haynes & Bryan Bickford  
Patrick Bowler  
Grace Post & Jonathon Bradford  
Bonnie Bramejor  
Jim & Kitty Buck  
David & Gwen Buday  
Nancy Burke Smith  
Hon. George & Mrs. Nancy Buth  
Laurie Cirivello  
Evelyn Columbus  
Ann & Bob Cooper  
Janeth & Phil Coray  
Laurie & Crawford Craft  
David Czurak  
Joe T. Darden  
Sandra & Gary Davis  
Robert & Betty Jane Dean  
Daryl Domke  
Doug Donnell  
Ron Eberhardt  
Vernon & Johanna Ehlers  
Thomas Fehsenfeld  
Dale & Kathie Feldpausch  
Dave & Marilyn Fernstrum  
Larry & Joan Gardner  
Mike & Pat Haines  
Gail Harrison  
Barbara Haynes

Carol Hennessy  
Terri Land & Dan Hibma  
Susan B. Hoekema  
Preston Hopson  
Becky Hosley  
Paul Ippel  
Elaine Sterrett & Paul Isley  
Freddie L. Johnson  
Bart Jonker  
Liz Keegan  
Ralph & Ruby Kickert  
Nadine Klein  
Douglas Kohlbeck  
Larry & Jeanie Koops  
Mark Kornelis  
Robert & Linda Lalley  
Brian & Valeri Lawson  
Eric & Mary Libby  
Elizabeth & Jerry Lykins  
Marie Marfia  
Lesley Mayer  
Ali & Matt Meier  
Danell & Michael Merren  
Chris & Alison Meyer  
William & Paula Murphy  
Gordon Olson  
H. Rhett & Jeralyn Pinsky  
Lyn Raymond  
Tim Reimink  
Tony & Carolyn Roussey  
Michael Schuler  
Suzanne Schulz  
Alberto Serrano  
Margaret Sieh  
Sharon Smith  
Ruth Stevens & Thomas Stellard  
Richard & Mary Stevens  
Kathleen Feeney & John Stuiwe  
Jerome & Judith Subar  
Denise Suerth  
Jim Lawren Susan  
Peggy Sylvester  
Clinton Todd  
Rudy & Nancy Van Donk  
Lynn Heemstra & William Vanvugt  
Lee Nelson Weber & Larry Weber  
Hubert & Ann Weller  
Mike & Mary Alice Williams  
John & Mary Zinkand

