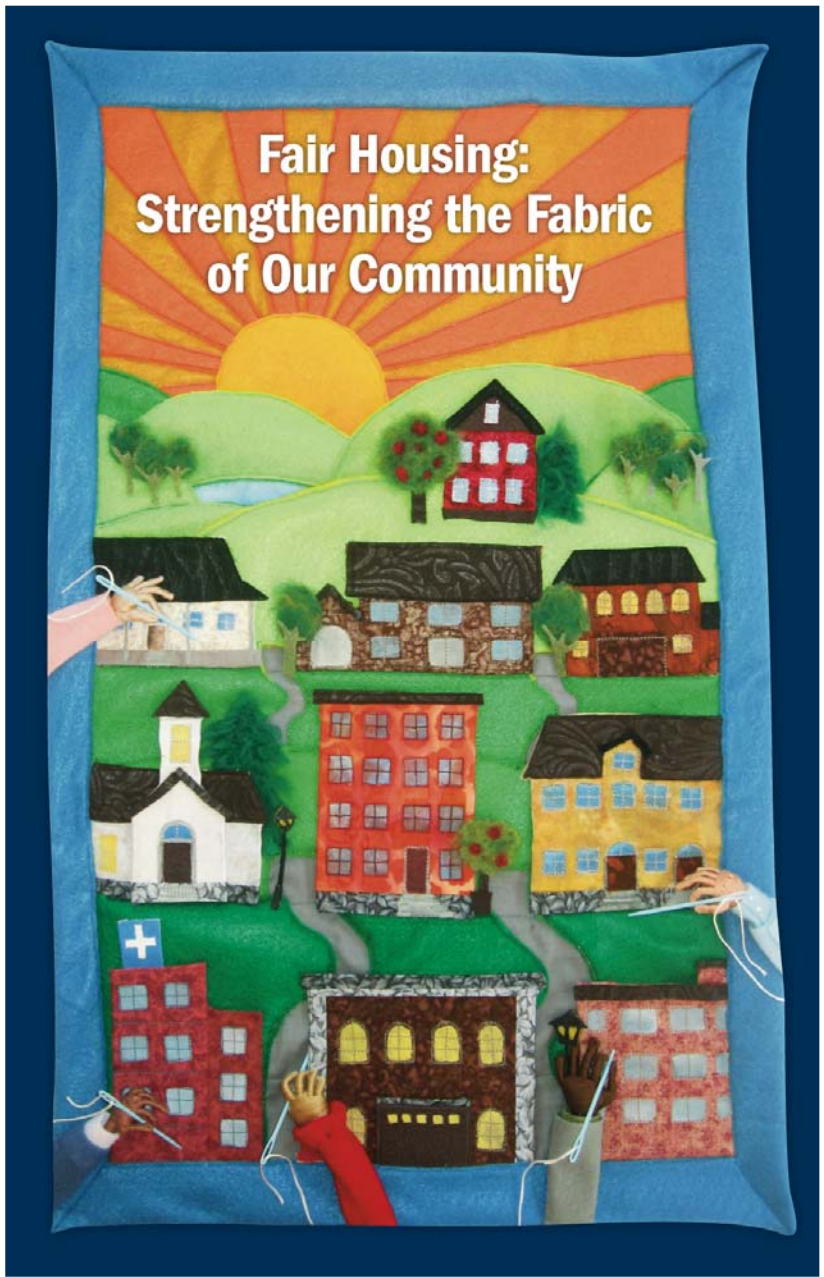


2009 ANNUAL REPORT



Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

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Letter from Nancy Haynes

Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

2009 proved that 29 years of hammering away at housing discrimination, constantly refocusing on our mission, and building strong partnerships comes in handy when times get tough. Despite the huge challenges our country and more specifically, our region faced in 2009, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan (FHCWM) was able to maintain stable funding, add necessary staff and meet a huge increase in the demand for services; thanks in large part to the strength of our foundation .

We started the year with news that the FHCWM had been awarded a three year grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide fair housing services throughout west Michigan. HUD's decision to three year contract totaling close to \$825,000 was based upon FHCWM's past performance on similar one year contracts. This marked the first time the FHCWM had ever been awarded a multiple year contract for funding affording the wonderful luxury of being able to plan and focus its work for the next 36 months and to more proactively address the obstacles that stand in the way of fair housing in our 11 county service area. That federal funding, as well as local support, helped to make 2009 the most impactful in the FHCWM's storied 29 year history.

One of the benefits of the multi-year grant was the opportunity to reorganize the work of the FHCWM to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. By late winter, the FHCWM had re-organized into the two distinct departments of Education and Advocacy. Thanks to the hard work, flexibility and dedication of the FHCWM's staff, the reorganization proved seamless and incredibly effective. As a result, in 2009, the FHCWM answered a record number of telephone calls, handled double the number of fair housing complaints at 301 (up from 167 in 2008), and offered more fair housing training opportunities to more people than ever before in its history.

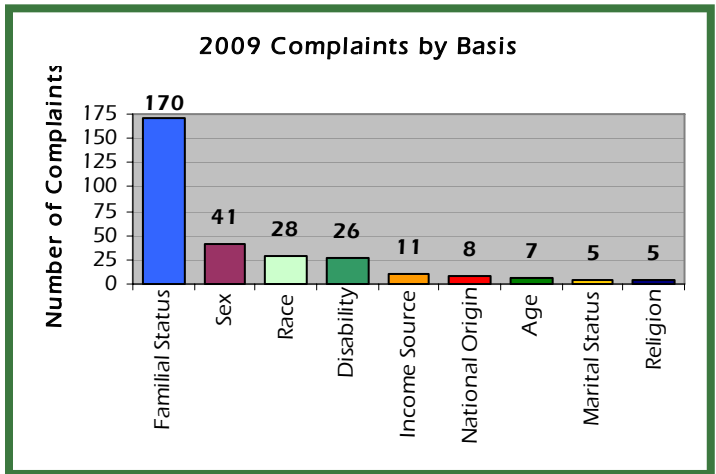
Another benefit of the strong foundation of support for the work of the FHCWM was the ability to host three top notch fair housing events during 2009, despite the challenges to our local and national economies. These events included the 22nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon and Workshop Series, the Lakeshore Fair Housing Breakfast, and the Friends and Members Fair Housing Luncheon, attended by over 650 participants. Even more telling was that past event sponsors overcame their challenges and expressed the desire to remain associated with the FHCWM and found a way to sponsor the events, even if at lower levels, resulting in even stronger partnerships going forward.

As in any structure, unforeseen events happen that crack and weaken the foundation. In 2009, one of these events was the explosion of internet housing advertising, resulting, in part, from the ongoing foreclosure crisis and the influx of first time rental property owners, who are unfamiliar with fair housing law. Over half of the complaints the FHCWM received in 2009 involved some form of illegal, discriminatory advertising, the majority of which were internet postings. Internet advertising is a new and dynamic area of fair housing law which lacks clear guidance. For this reason, the FHCWM proactively developed training and education and offered to work with entities to identify their responsibilities and opportunities to stop discriminatory advertisements from being published. Regrettably, this caused some strain in long standing and very valued partnerships within various sectors of the housing industry. It is hoped that as the unsettled areas become more settled, those cracks and soft spots will again be firm.

As optimistic as we are about the future, 2010 too will hold its challenges. Thanks to the strong foundation of partners, support and history upon which the FHCWM is built, the FHCWM is poised to effectively address those challenges working with the region to eliminate practices of housing discrimination and to promote diverse, open communities through education and advocacy.



COMPLAINTS - During the 2009 calendar year, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan handled 301 complaints of illegal housing discrimination, nearly doubling the previous record high, 168 complaints, set in 2008. These complaints were filed on the following bases (also see chart below): age (7), disability (26), familial status (170), income source (11), marital status (5), national origin (8), race (28) and sex (41). Of the 301 complaints, 227 were agency-initiated by the FHCWM and the remaining 74 were client-initiated.



The influx in complaints was a direct result of the growing prevalence of discriminatory advertising by landlords, rental agents and/or homeowners using online resources to market their properties. In 2009, the FHCWM identified over 90 blatantly discriminatory advertisements, 79 of which discriminated against families with children. These advertisements contained statements such as, “Only 1 adult no children,” “sorry no pets or children,” and “perfect apartment for a single person or a couple,” among many others. The practice of discriminatory advertising online grows increasingly prevalent and represents a major impediment to equal housing choice for the residents of West Michigan.

The 74 complaints filed by individual clients were on the following bases: age (2), disability (20), familial status (10), income source (9), marital status (1), national origin (7), race (21), religion (2) and sex (2). As of the end of 2009, nearly half, 47%, of these complaints had been resolved and the rest remained open and under investigation. Through research, investigation, mediation and resolution, the FHCWM helped 17 clients with the granting of reasonable accommodation or modification requests, assisted one landlord in renting a home by mediating with a neighbor that had engaged in discriminatory harassment, and contributed to 4 clients overcoming a discriminatory practice to obtain safe, affordable housing.



HIGHLIGHTED CASES - In 2009, the FHCWM processed numerous cases that required special attention and time because of the nature and extent of the discrimination that had occurred. Because of the unprecedented number of cases received by the FHCWM and the level of attention required, the FHCWM continues to work on many of these cases toward a resolution. Of these cases, the FHCWM highlighted the following:

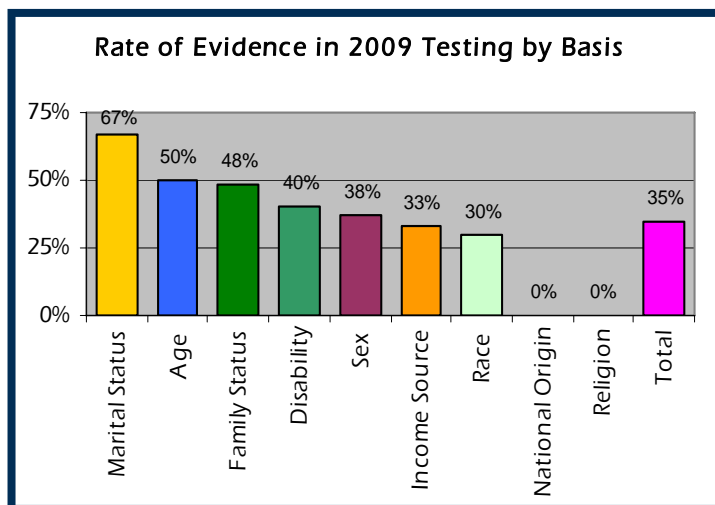
Complaint 09-053: A single mother was told by a property owner that she would have to pay double the security deposit because she had children. FHCWM testing supported the allegation. This case was filed with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and remains under investigation.

Complaint 09-181: A caseworker noticed that a local apartment complex was quoting higher rental rates and different availability to African American clients than to Caucasian clients. FHCWM testing supported the allegation. This case was filed with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights and remains under investigation.

TESTING - Under its contracts for Fair Housing Services in 2009, the FHCWM conducted 386 matched pair tests in over 20 cities throughout west Michigan in order to survey, identify and address practices of illegal housing discrimination. Of these tests, 153 were conducted in response to bona fide allegations of housing discrimination, and the remaining 253 were conducted as market research to survey the status of fair housing practices. The sites for the survey tests were determined by

the Executive Director, the Director of Advocacy and/or the Test Coordinator of the FHCWM based upon past complaints, past testing and/or other market or community research. The FHCWM conducted the tests on the following bases: age (3), disability (21), familial status (79), source of income (15), marital status (7), national origin (2), race (250), religion (1) and sex (8).

Although the highest rates of evidence of housing discrimination were found to be on the bases of age and marital status, the FHCWM uncovered 29 instances of housing discrimination based upon familial status, and 65 instances of housing discrimination based upon race. Thus, in frequency, and hence in practice, familial status and race prove to be the most common bases of housing discrimination in west Michigan.



2009 Education & Outreach Data

The FHCWM maintains that education and outreach play an equally important role to enforcement in the fight against illegal housing discrimination. Education and outreach services provide housing consumers the awareness necessary to recognize and assert their fair housing rights and also empower the housing industry with the knowledge of the law in order to prevent future fair housing violations. To that end, throughout 2009 the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan provided comprehensive fair housing education and outreach services to nearly 15,500 people throughout west Michigan. These services included 3 major events hosted by the FHCWM, 33 trainings for community members and members of the housing industry, 15 Fair Housing Book Club meetings, and attending numerous other meetings and events to provide education and outreach. As a result of these efforts, the FHCWM empowered over 1,200 people throughout west Michigan with knowledge of fair housing rights and laws. The FHCWM also spread awareness of fair housing through the development, publishing, and distribution of fair housing materials, including brochures, newspaper articles, newsletters, press releases, etc., to over 15,000 people.

22nd Annual Luncheon and Workshop Series Fair Housing: Strengthening the Fabric of Our Community

The 22nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon and Workshop Series took place on April 22, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This event began with three morning workshops entitled *Foreclosure in Our Neighborhoods: A Revitalizing Community Response*, *Hate Crimes in Our Neighborhoods: Enhancing Awareness and Prevention Strategies*, and *Accessible Housing: Building New Opportunities*. These workshops were attended by a record 180 people and were very well received. Comments included "Great Job", "Great info. Wonderful & engaging speakers", "Fantastic Panel", and "Excellent Topic".

The Luncheon began with opening remarks by Doretha Ardoin (FHWM Board President) and then led into the presentation of the 2009 Fair Housing Awards. The "Fair Housing Award for an Outstanding Individual" was awarded to Judy Barnes of the Home & Building Association of Greater Grand Rapids, and the "Fair Housing Award for an Outstanding Organization" was presented to the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, which was accepted by Assistant Director Jackie O'Connor. Dale Zahn and Yvonne Sims, Co-Chairs of the 2009 Membership Drive, spoke about the importance of joining the FHCWM.

Following the award ceremony, Nancy Haynes, Executive Director of the FHCWM, introduced keynote speaker Dr. Nandinee Kutty. Dr. Kutty is an economist and policy consultant as well as co-editor of the book *Segregation: The Rising Costs for America*. In her speech, she shared "Eight Points on the Value of Integration to America" as well as copies of an article she authored, titled "*Fair, Green, Smart—Housing in the 21st Century*." The luncheon was attended by over 360 individuals and was a great success!

Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing

The Fair Housing Center hosted its 3rd annual *Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing* breakfast event on Wednesday, September 16, 2009, at the Baker Lofts Building in Holland. The event was supported by the Holland Sentinel, Byron Bank, Chemical Bank, Fifth Third Bank, Bank of Holland, Bank of America and CityFlats Hotel, for a total of \$5,750 in sponsorship. More than 90 people registered to learn more about fair housing on the lakeshore and hear from attorney Steve Dane, of Relman & Dane. Mr. Dane shared stories of regional Fair Housing Heroes and presented a powerful video summarizing a fair housing case wherein a neighborhood in Ohio was denied access to public water for 50 years based on race. The 2009 Lakeshore Fair Housing Award was presented to Mark Kornelis of the Ottawa County Community Action Agency.

Members & Friends of Fair Housing

The Fair Housing Center hosted its 3rd annual *Members & Friends of Fair Housing* luncheon on October 20, 2009, at the West Michigan University Graduate Center in Grand Rapids with a total of 200 guests in attendance. This event, entitled *Members & Friends of Fair Housing: Constellations of Opportunities*, featured keynote speaker Dr. Gregory Squires. Dr. Squires is a professor at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. His presentation, titled "Integration Exhaustion, Race Fatigue, and the American Dream," presented his research regarding the intensity of racial segregation at the metropolitan level as it relates to the proportion of high-cost loans as well as his recommendations to remedy the resulting economic fallout.

The "Fair Housing Advocate Awards" were presented to two very committed individuals who have worked to further fair housing: Pat Vredevoogd Combs and Regina M. Davis. Ms. Vredevoogd Combs is a long-time fair housing advocate and realtor; she recently served on the national Fair Housing Commission. Ms. Davis volunteered and worked for the Center for 14 years; during her tenure she conducted 2,403 tests and took 1,417 complaints thereby helping more than 900 people and families.

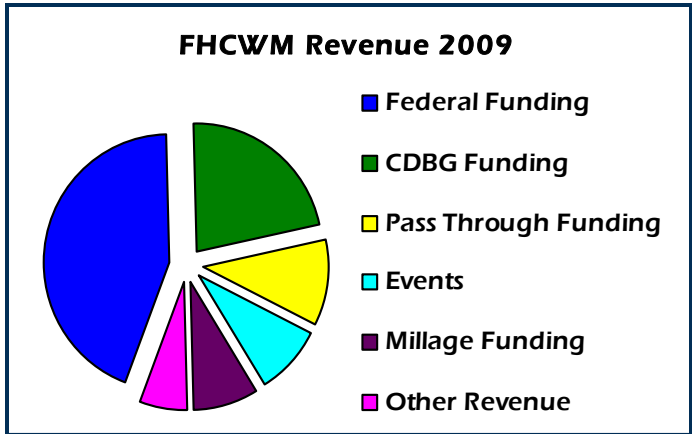
Fair Housing Book Club

The Fair Housing Center initiated its Fair Housing Book Club in 2008 in order to raise awareness of fair housing-related issues and to help define their impact on west Michigan communities. The books and movies chosen highlighted personal and/or true stories with fair housing implications. During 2009, the Fair Housing Book Club read seven books and one play, which were discussed during 15 Book Club meetings. For each book, the FHCWM held a fruitful discussion session both in Grand Rapids and in Holland. A summary of the novels read to date is available at www.fhcwm.org.

2009 Financial Report

The FHCWM received approximately \$620,000.00 in revenue in 2009. Approximately 44% of the revenue came from a federal grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; approximately 22% came from Community Development Block Grant contracts with the County of Kent and the Cities of

Grand Rapids, Wyoming and Holland; and approximately 8% came from a grant under the Kent County Senior Millage. These grants are used to fund education, enforcement and advocacy services; compliance monitoring; and administrative



services. The also FHCWM fiducially administered the Foreclosure Response Program which accounted for approximately 10% of the revenue. The FHCWM held three major events in 2009, the 22nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series held in April 2009 to celebrate Fair Housing Month and the Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing and Members & Friends of Fair Housing events, which accounted for approximately 7% of the total revenue for the year. Membership contributions, used to further fair housing activities, accounted for approximately 2%. Other income, such as contracted professional services, trainings and investment interest accounted for 6% of the revenue generated in 2009.

Wages and benefits represented approximately 67% of the total expenses in 2009. Fundraising expenses represented approximately 6%, and other operating expenses represented approximately 27% of total expenses in 2009.



2009 Membership Drive

Thanks to all the generous support received throughout the year, the FHCWM exceeded its 2009 Membership Goal and raised over \$11,000 for FHCWM programs!

Supporting Members

- Byron Bank
- Fred Mackraz
- Fifth Third Bank
- Marilyn Titche
- Kate Pew Wolters

Corporate Members

- ChoiceOne Bank
- Goodrich Quality Theaters
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Hope Network
- Land & Company
- Macatawa Bank
- Noble Property Management
- The Nokomis Foundation
- Yesterdog

Business Members

- Advocate Law Offices
- Aquinas College
- Arbor Lake Apartments
- Bayberry Apartments, LLC
- BBG Fairbanks
- Bob & Aleicia Woodrick Diversity Learning Center
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.
- EnviroSafe, Inc.
- Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan
- Good Samaritan Ministries
- Habitat for Humanity of Kent County, Inc
- Holland Rescue Mission
- Home Repair Services
- Keller Williams Realty
- Kent County Commissioner
- Kuilema Pottery Inc.
- Lola Audu Real Estate, Inc.
- Management Business Solutions
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Neighborhood Ventures
- New Development Corp
- Red Oak Management Co.
- Robbin's Nest Apartments
- The Salvation Army Booth Family Services Universal Development of Michigan

MEMBERS

MEMBERS

Individual Members

- Anonymous (3)
- Thomas Appel
- Peter & Glenna Armstrong
- Peter Armstrong
- Michael & Hilary Arthur
- Mary Ayers
- Betty Zylstra & David Baak
- Sophie Baker
- Rebecca London & Mary Banghart
- Glenn Barkan
- Deb Barton
- Dave Bee
- Kay Behrenwald
- Michelle Behrenwald
- Louis Berra
- Val & Howard Best
- Guy & Kim Bickford
- Bert & Janet Bleke
- Rosalynn Bliss
- Janet Borgdorff
- Jonathan & Grace Bradford
- Otto Brannum
- Scott Brinkmeyer
- Susan Broman
- Jim & Donna Brooks
- Jeanine Bryant
- Jim & Kitty Buck
- David & Gwen Buday
- Dave Bulkowski & Melissa Budzynski
- Thomas & Cheryl Butcher
- George & Nancy Buth
- John & Linda Carman
- Tracie Coffman
- Evelyn Columbus
- Huey G. Copeland
- Janeth & Phil Coray
- Donna Cornwell
- Laurie & Crawford Craft
- Scott & Andrea Crumback
- Leslie Curry
- David Czurak
- Marc Daneman
- Sara DeBoer
- Eric & Sharai DeLong
- Jeffrey & Janis DeVree
- Mark & Lisa DeVries
- Jim & Roberta Dischinger-Smedes
- Daryl Domke
- Doug Donnell
- Joel & Erin Dye
- Michael Chielens & Janice Earl
- Vernon Ehlers
- Marianne Essing
- David & Marilyn Fernstrum
- Annesia Freeman
- Sherrill Frost-Brown
- Emily Furrow
- Larry & Joan Gardner
- Francine Gaston
- Dan Grzywacz
- Mike & Pat Haines
- Jerry Hallmark
- Gail Harrison
- JoAnn Hatfield
- Barbara Haynes
- George Heartwell
- Kenneth & Gail Gunst Heffner
- Lisa Hickman
- Susan & David Hoekema
- Mary Hollinrake
- Peter Hopson
- Jeanie Hosey
- Philip Hoskin
- John Hunting
- Paul & Elaine Isely
- Courtney & Ora Jones
- Bart & Beth Jonker
- Michael Schuler & Katrina Kalisz
- Liz Keegan
- Mark & Amy Kornelis
- Diane & Michael Kroll
- David & Melissa LaGrand
- Dan Hibma & Terri Land
- Brian & Valeri Lawson
- Ben Logan
- Thomas & Ann Logan
- Patrick Lonergan
- Rhonda Lubberts
- Elizabeth Lykins
- William & Pamela Manus
- Chris & Kelly Clum Matthyse
- William Murphy
- Janet Nelson
- Gordon Olson
- Cindy Osman
- Barb Palombi
- Tedd Parsons
- Joe & Marie Parzych
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- H. Rhett & Jeralyn Pinsky
- Dennis & Carol Preston
- Sonia Pryor
- Timothy & Lauri Reimink
- Venessa Remo
- Elizabeth Spreitzer & Rebecca Riley
- Shawnta Robertson
- Armand Robinson
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- Debbie Schuhman
- Suzanne & Scott Schulz
- Alberto Serrano
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- Sharon Smith
- Linda Smith
- Jack Hoffman & Rebecca Smith-Hoffman
- Eric Spungen
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- Ruth Stevens & Thomas Stellard
- Bill & Judy Stelling
- Dave & Marcy Stelling
- Richard & Mary Stevens
- Elizabeth Vezino & Andrew Stoddard
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- Dennis & Deborah Sturtevant
- Jerome & Judith Subar
- Denise Suerth
- Greg & Audry Sundstrom
- Jim & Lawren Susan
- Glenn & Karen Tjapkes
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- Jeff & Nancy Van Winkle
- Amber Verburg
- Lori Vinson
- Joe Walker
- Karla Walker
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- Don Williams
- James Wilson
- Bob Woodrick
- Debbie Wright

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Bob Dunn, Keller Williams Realty Holland
Joel Dye, City of Holland-Community Development Department
Jorge Gonzalez, Macatawa Bank
Gail Harrison, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance
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Elizabeth Vezino, Director of Advocacy
Lucia Belassi White, Test Coordinator
Liz Spreitzer, Fair Housing Specialist
Reverend David May, Senior Project Coordinator



*Eliminating practices of illegal housing
discrimination and promoting diverse, open
communities through education and advocacy.*



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