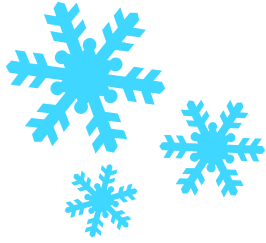


Winter 2009



# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

## *Building on 30 Years of Fair Housing in West Michigan*

### Fair Housing Center Plans Its 23rd Annual Event for April 22, 2010

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is very pleased to announce that Department of U.S. Housing & Urban Development's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity, John Trasviña, will be the keynote speaker for the *23rd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series* on **Thursday, April 22, 2010** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The theme for the event is "*Removing Barriers & Creating Opportunities: Building on 30 Years of Fair Housing in West Michigan.*" The FHCWM will again offer three concurrent morning workshops at 8:45 a.m. until 11:45 a.m. The Luncheon begins promptly at 12:00 p.m.



Assistant Secretary Trasviña will speak about fair housing in the 21st century, including a policy update from the current administration and current fair housing trends and cases.

The FHCWM is planning three comprehensive and timely workshops this year that connect fair housing with various critical issues facing our communities. As we begin a new decade and celebrate our 30th Anniversary, the FHCWM raises three questions based on current community issues and trends.

The first workshop, **Implementing Our Community Response to Foreclosure: What Can I Do?**, will

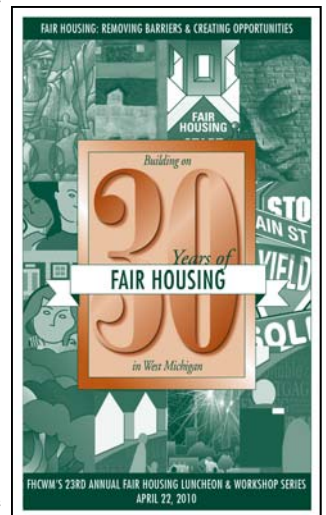
follow up a conversation from last year's workshop on turning the foreclosure crisis into opportunities within our communities and will feature a recently released community report as well as a vigorous discussion on what roles we can play as individuals to contribute to solving the foreclosure crisis. A representative of the National Fair Housing Alliance will frame the issue from the national perspective. Jeffrey May, of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, will highlight foreclosure rescue scams and what can be done as one of the many related issues that need to be addressed as part of the whole. Gustavo Rotondaro of the Community Research Institute of Grand Valley State University will provide foreclosure-related data at the neighborhood level to highlight the particular challenges facing each community in the Kent County area. Kym Spring, of the local Foreclosure Response, will present the "Comprehensive Response Plan: Addressing the Foreclosure Crisis" with an emphasis on the opportunities available for involvement.

The second workshop, **Am I Welcome to Live Here? Analyzing the Impact of Discriminatory Advertising**, will focus on the impact of discriminatory advertising on housing choice. The panel will share current trends and cases as well as information from two new reports. A representative of the National Fair Housing Alliance will discuss their new report, "For Rent: No Kids! How Internet Housing Advertisements Perpetuate Discrimination" and recommendations for action. Mira Tanna of the Metropolitan St. Louis Equal Housing Opportunity Council will share information from their new report "Selective Marketing: A Report on Senior Housing Providers Compliance with Fair Housing Act Advertisement Requirements."

John Obee of Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee & Kull will share information on a landmark advertisement case in southeast Michigan. Elizabeth Vezino, the FHCWM's Director of Advocacy, will provide information on current cases and trends in west Michigan. This workshop is made possible through the support of the Kent County Senior Millage.

*Kent County Senior Millage*

The third workshop, **Why Can't I Buy the Home I Want? Addressing Barriers to Developing Fair, Affordable Housing** will cover a range of issues that builders and developers are facing that are resulting in higher costs and fewer affordable homes being developed, thereby creating a disparate impact and decreasing equal housing opportunity. This workshop is being presented in partnership with the Workforce Housing Development Committee of the Home & Building Association of Greater Grand Rapids. The panel includes John Bitely of Sable Developing; Doretha Ardoin of Grand Moves Realty and a representative of the National Fair Housing Alliance.



# ...FHCWM Notes & News...

## 2010 Fair Housing Awards: Nominations Needed

Thank you to all of you who nominated such worthy community members in 2009 for the Fair Housing Award. We *really* value your input! To nominate an individual or an organization for a 2010 Fair Housing Award, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to the FHCWM by **March 15, 2010**.

### An FHCWM First!

#### Author Calls in to Fair Housing Book Club

The FHCWM staff were surprised and pleased to be contacted by author Steve Luxenberg regarding the recent Fair Housing Book Club meeting featuring Mr. Luxenberg's book, Annie's Ghosts: A Journey Into a Family Secret. His book outlines his quest for information upon discovering that his mother, Beth, had a sister, Annie, who was institutionalized in her 20's based upon her mental and physical disabilities. Throughout his life, his mother had told him and his siblings that she was an only child. Mr. Luxenberg offered to participate by phone in to the January 14th meeting in Holland and staff eagerly accepted his offer. The result was a powerful discussion covering a broad range of topics including patient's rights, lack of housing choice, immigration and family secrets among many others. Many thanks to our dedicated members in Grand Rapids and Holland for the thoughtful discussions to date!

#### Celebrating 30 Years of Fair Housing in West Michigan: 1980 to 2010

Did you know that the FHCWM was started by a group of concerned citizens? 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 to accomplish this end, which was being tried without much success in other communities, the GRPS focused on integrating the neighborhoods thereby integrating the schools. As such, committees were formed to study how best to address the problem of segregated neighborhoods and schools. GRPS sponsored a conference entitled "Improving Education and Human Services in Grand Rapids: A Planning Laboratory". One of the action plans that came out of this conference to improve life in Grand Rapids was "to provide adequate housing for everyone". Stay tuned to our newsletters for more of our **30 Year History** as we celebrate all year long!

## National Fair Housing News

**Washington, DC**—The National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and four of its member organizations announced a landmark agreement with the A.G. Spanos Companies to increase housing accessibility for people with disabilities. Under the agreement, the nation's fifth largest builder of residential real estate will retrofit properties in eleven states at an estimated cost of \$7.4 million. The agreement includes a partnership between Spanos and the fair housing agencies to make apartments accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs and people with limited mobility. It amicably resolves a lawsuit filed by NFHA and its members under the Fair Housing Act's accessibility requirements and covers 123 properties built since 1991. The agreement also establishes a \$4.2 million national fund to provide retrofitting grants to people with disabilities across the country.

## Local Fair Housing News

**Complaint #09-138** - The FHCWM received a complaint from a woman that had been denied a reasonable accommodation request to have a companion animal in the senior community in which she resided. The community had a "no pets" policy and the Board of Directors voted against the woman's request because they did not want to allow animals of any kind within the community. The Board was unaware that such a practice was a violation of the Fair Housing Act. The woman had supporting documentation from her doctor which verified that she met the definition of disability in the Fair Housing Act, and stated how the companion animal would alleviate the affects of her disability to allow her full and equal access to her home. This information should have been sufficient for the Board to grant her request. The FHCWM worked with the Board to inform them about fair housing laws, and their responsibilities under such laws. Upon an increased awareness of their fair housing responsibilities, the Board granted the woman's request for a companion animal. She currently resides happily with her dog "Stella" by which she has gained full and equal access to the enjoyment of her home.

## FHCWM Receives Bank of America Grant

The FHCWM is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Bank of America Charitable Foundation for operating support. The funds will help the FHCWM meet its goals of ensuring that residents of west Michigan have increased knowledge and understanding of rights and obligations under fair housing laws, effectively discouraging discriminatory housing practices and ensuring that homeseekers have equal access to housing opportunities.



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

20 Hall Street SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

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

F: (616) 451-2657

### FHCWM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **Doretha Ardoin, President**

*Grand Moves Realty*

#### **Tim Reimink, Vice President**

*Crowe Horwath*

#### **Valerie Best, Treasurer**

*Concrete Cutting & Breaking, Inc.*

#### **Sharon Smith, Secretary**

*Aquinas College*

#### **Michelle Behrenwald**

*Inspired Design*

#### **Dave Bulkowski**

*Disability Advocates*

#### **Ron Eberhardt**

*Community Activist*

#### **Floriza Genautis**

*Management Business Solutions*

#### **Ira Hart**

*Consumers Energy*

#### **Dan Koorndyk**

*State Farm Insurance*

#### **Hon. Benjamin Logan**

*61st District Court*

#### **Patrick Lonergan**

*Fifth Third Bank*

#### **Fred Mackraz**

*Kuiper Orlebeke, PC*

#### **Barbara Palombi**

*Grand Valley State University*

#### **Suzanne Schulz**

*City of Grand Rapids*

#### **Dave Stellan**

*Bank of America*

#### **Jim Wilson**

*Noble Property Management*

#### **Troy Zapolski**

*Land & Company*

# Thank You 2009 FHCWM Members

**THANK YOU SO MUCH to all of our 2009 members! Because of your generous support throughout the year, we exceeded our 2009 Membership Goal of \$9,000 by raising \$11,488 for FHCWM programs! These funds are critical to our education and outreach efforts.**

## Special Thanks to Our:

### Supporting Members

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

### Corporate Members

- ChoiceOne Bank
- Goodrich Quality Theaters
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Hope Network
- Land & Co.
- 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

### 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
- Anneshia 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
- John R. Petruszak
- H. Rhett & Jeralyn Pinsky
- Dennis & Carol Preston
- Sonia Pryor
- Timothy & Lauri Reimink
- Venessa Remo
- Elizabeth Spreitzer & Rebecca Riley
- Shawnta Robertson
- Armand Robinson
- Tony & Carolyn Roussey
- Jeff & Susie Schreur
- Debbie Schuhman
- Suzanne & Scott Schulz
- Alberto Serrano
- Margaret Sieh
- Ned & Pat Smith
- Sharon Smith
- Linda Smith
- Jack Hoffman & Rebecca Smith-Hoffman
- Eric Spungen
- Ruth & Steve Stegeman
- Ruth Stevens & Thomas Stellard
- Bill & Judy Stellin
- Dave & Marcy Stellin
- Richard & Mary Stevens
- Elizabeth Vezino & Andrew Stoddard
- Kathleen Feeney & John Stuiwe
- Dennis & Deborah Sturtevant
- Jerome & Judith Subar
- Denise Suerth
- Greg & Audry Sundstrom
- Jim & Lawren Susan
- Glenn & Karen Tjapkes
- Michael Tobin - ReMax of Grand Rapids
- Carol Townsend
- Jeff & Nancy Van Winkle
- Amber VerBurg
- Lori Vinson
- Joe Walker
- Karla Walker
- Larry & Lee Nelson Weber
- Lucia & Casey White
- Mike & Mary Alice Williams
- Don Williams
- James Wilson
- Bob Woodrick
- Debbie Wright

# Save the Dates! Upcoming Fair Housing Events

## **FHCWM Board Update**

The FHCWM would like to introduce a new member of its Lakeshore Advisory Board: **Susan Cervantes** of ACRDC, Inc.  
*Welcome, Susan!*

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the FHCWM, we'd like to thank **Margaret Sieh** for her many years of service as an FHCWM Board Member. Ms. Sieh joined the Board in 1990 and dedicated nearly 20 years to the Center. She was a huge help in presenting the annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series each April.

*Thank you, Margaret!*

## **Fair Housing Book Club**

Upcoming discussions:

**February 18th** in Holland on The Memory Keeper's Daughter by Kim Edwards

**February 23rd** in Grand Rapids, the "Last Chair" video will be shown.

**March 11th** in Holland, the "Coal Run: Making the Case for Water" DVD will be shown.

**March 18th** in Grand Rapids on One Thousand White Women: The Journals of May Dodd by Jim Fergus

All meetings begin at 11:45 am. Locations: Holland at Disability Network (421 Century Lane); Grand Rapids at FHCWM (20 Hall SE). Bring a lunch & join us!

## **Fair Housing Trainings**

The Fair Housing Center offers fair housing trainings, including Fair Housing & Advertising, Fair Housing Training for Rental Professionals and Fair Lending sessions. Costs vary depending on the type of training. Each training is 3 hours and includes a comprehensive packet of reference materials.

Some sessions are held at the FHCWM office; we can also come to your location. Call Liz Keegan at (616) 451-2980 to learn more or register.

**Check our website home page for upcoming dates: [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org).**

The FHCWM hosts two **tester trainings** each month. Testers are volunteers that play the role of a homeseeker and receive a stipend in return for their time and services. In order to accommodate differing schedules, one training will take place during business hours while the other will be held in the evening. For the specific training dates, to register, or any other questions contact Lucia White at (616) 451-2980.

[www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org)  
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
20 Hall Street SE

WEST MICHIGAN  
FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF



Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Grand Rapids, MI  
Permit No. 785