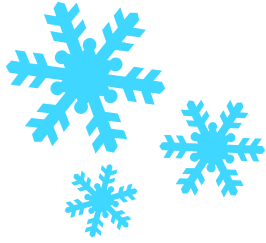


Winter 2009



FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

Fair Housing: Strengthening the Fabric of Our Community

Fair Housing Center Plans Its 22nd Annual Event for April 22, 2009

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is pleased to announce that Dr. Nandinee K. Kutty will be the keynote speaker for the 22nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series on **Wednesday, April 22, 2009** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The theme for the event is “Fair Housing: Strengthening the Fabric of Our Community.” The FHCWM will offer three morning workshops concurrently at 8:45 am until 11:45 am. The Luncheon begins promptly at 12:00 pm (registration opens at 11:45 am).



Dr. Nandinee Kutty will speak about the cost of segregation to our communities, the imperative for equality and the value of integration. Dr. Kutty is an economist and policy consultant

in the area of housing and economic policy. Her areas of specialization include fair housing, economic mobility, impact of housing-related factors on family well-being, Social Security, housing for the elderly, and macroeconomic stabilization. Dr. Kutty was a professor at Cornell University from 1993 to 2000. She is an editor and contributor for the book, Segregation: The Rising Costs for America (Routledge, 2008). Dr. Kutty has been featured as an expert commentator on television and radio. She has a Ph.D. in economics from the Maxwell School, Syracuse University.

Once again, the FHCWM is planning three comprehensive and timely workshops this year that connect fair housing with various critical issues facing our communities. The first workshop, “Foreclosure in Our Neighborhoods: A Revitalizing Community Response,” will feature George McCarthy, Senior Program Officer of the Ford Foundation. Mr. McCarthy will provide the framework for the discussion from the national perspective and the impact at the local level. Kym Spring, of Foreclosure Response, will also join the panel among others to discuss the unique efforts happening in west Michigan to turn the foreclosure crisis into opportunities for communities. This workshop will be moderated by former FHCWM Executive Director Lee Nelson Weber (Dyer-Ives Foundation).

The second workshop, “Hate Crimes in Our Neighborhoods: Enhancing Awareness and Prevention Strategies,” will provide information on community responses to hate crimes as well as personal experiences dealing with hate crime. The panel includes Sherrill Frost-Brown, Director of Membership Services of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA); west Michigan resident Darla Robinson; John Obee of Wood, Kull, Herschfus, Obee & Kull PC; and a representative of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Ms. Brown will share information on community response strategies, including NFHA’s “Fight Hate: A Rapid Response Strategy.” Mr. Obee will share information on a recent hate crime and fair housing case in Livonia, MI, and Ms. Robinson will share her story of racial intimidation and the subsequent community response. This workshop will be moderated by FHCWM Board President Doretha Ardoin (Coldwell Banker-AJS Schmidt).

The third workshop, “Accessible Housing: Building New Opportunities” will cover a range of issues on the need for and importance of accessible housing, especially in light of the aging population. The panel includes Cat Cloud, Senior Vice President of the National Fair Housing Alliance; Margaret Biggs, ZeroStep Member of the Disability Advocates of Kent County; Regina Davis, Enforcement Director of the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan; and Lucia Rios, Accessibility Specialist of the Disability Network/Lakeshore. Ms. Cloud will share information from the national perspective, including the volume of non-compliant developments being built and the fair housing cases in progress as a result. Ms. Rios and Ms. Biggs will share information about the profound impact inaccessible housing has on the disability community and information on local resources available. Ms. Davis will share information from local cases and investigations, reasonable modifications that can be made and opportunities for builders and developers to work with area partners in order to prevent violations before they occur. Ms. Davis will also discuss the impact this currently has on the senior community and will have as this population continue to grow. This workshop will be moderated by FHCWM Board Member Dave Bulkowski (Disability Advocates of Kent County). This workshop is made possible through the support of the Kent County Senior Millage.

*Kent County
Senior Millage*

...FHCWM Notes & News...

2009 Fair Housing Awards: Nominations Needed

Thank you to all of you who nominated such worthy community members in 2008 for the Fair Housing Award. We *really* value your input! To nominate an individual or an organization for a 2009 Fair Housing Award, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to the FHCWM by **March 16, 2009**.

HUD Staff Presents Grant Check to FHCWM Board of Directors

HUD representatives Yvonne Poindexter and Louis Berra joined the FHCWM Board of Directors at their January meeting to present a check in the amount of \$273,603.66 for the first year of funding secured through HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP).



From L to R: Doretha Ardoin, FHCWM Board President; Louis Berra, HUD Grand Rapids; Yvonne Poindexter, HUD Detroit; Nancy Haynes, FHCWM Executive Director

"The Future of Fair Housing" Released

The National Commission on Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity released a report of its findings after a six-month-long cross-country investigation into the state of fair housing in America. The bipartisan National Commission is the establishment of an independent enforcement agency that will rigorously pursue fair housing enforcement. The National Commission included local real estate agent Pat Vredevoogd Combs, who is also a FHCWM Member and past FHCWM Membership Co-Chair. The comprehensive report details the progress of the fair housing movement throughout the last 40 years, the pervasiveness of housing discrimination and segregation, and nine recommendations to further fair housing in our country. The report states, "Equal housing opportunity must be our collective goal...Only together, with a mix of education, enforcement, and policy tools, working across partisan lines, with government and private partnerships coordinated at the local, state, regional and federal level, can we begin to make our dreams real." The report and executive summary are available at www.fhcwm.org.

National Fair Housing News

Winnetka, IL—The Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs announced the settlement of a 3-year fair housing complaint against the 1630 Sheridan Road Corporation in Wilmette, IL. Interfaith alleged discriminatory policies relating to the familial status of prospective condo owners. In 2005, a real estate agent contacted Interfaith when her clients were unable to sell a unit to a family with two young children because of the cooperative's "Rules We Live By," which state. "This community is not considered suitable for children under 18 years of age. It is the residents' responsibility to communicate this information to a prospective purchaser either directly or through a realtor." The cooperative was not a legally designated senior building and therefore the rule violated the familial status protection under federal and state fair housing laws.

The settlement includes removal of the discriminatory policies and of the buildings designated as housing for older persons—intended and operated for occupancy by persons 55 year of age or older, \$20,000 to Interfaith, \$8,000 as a civil penalty, mandatory fair housing training, ongoing monitoring, and fair housing advertising within the building, to all residents and prospective residents, and full-page ads in the Wilmette newspaper regarding compliance with the Fair Housing Act.

Local Fair Housing News

Complaint #09-003 - The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan received a call from a client with an allegation of familial status discrimination against a landlord. The landlord allegedly told the client that if she wanted to live at his property she would have to pay a higher rental rate and that he would only allow her to be on a month to month lease because she had two teenaged sons that would be living with her. The landlord made statements such as, "I don't deal with kids," "I have had problems with kids in the past," and, "You know how teenaged boys can be." The FHCWM is currently investigating this case on behalf of the client.

FHCWM Welcomes New Board Members

The FHCWM would like to introduce the following three new members to its Board of Directors: Floriza Genautis, of Management Business Solutions; Fred Mackraz, of Kuiper Orlebeke, PC; and Barb Palombi, of the Career Counseling Department at Grand Valley State University. The FHCWM would also like to introduce the following two new members to its Lakeshore Advisory Board: Bob Dunn, of Keller Williams Realty; and Amber VerBurg, of Safe Title, Inc.

WELCOME!



**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

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Thank You 2008 FHCWM Members

Thanks to all the generous support received throughout the year we met our 2008 Membership Goal and raised \$9,000 for FHCWM programs!

Special Thanks to Our: Supporting Members

- Bill Lewis
- Fred Mackraz
- Kate Pew Wolters
- Marilyn Titcher

Corporate Members

- Bank of America
- Byron Bank
- Chemical Bank
- Dietool Engineering Co., Inc.
- DVK Construction
- Eastern Floral & Gifts
- EnviroSafe Inc.
- Goodrich Quality Theaters
- Habitat for Humanity of Kent County
- HBAGGR
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- John Hunting & Associates
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- Red Oak Management Co., Inc.
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- Audu Real Estate, Inc.
- Bayberry Apartments, LLC
- Bos & Glazier, PLC
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- Clare Wade Communications
- Compass Property Management, LLC
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Draper Group
- Fairbanks Townhouses
- Fishladder, Inc.
- Fountain Street Church
- Genesis Non-Profit Housing Corp.

- Good Samaritan Ministries
- Grand Rapids Study Club
- Heartland Builders LLC
- Holland Human Relations Commission
- Holland Rescue Mission
- Home Repair Services of Kent County, Inc.
- ICCF - HFS
- Kent County Commission
- Management Business Solutions
- Neighborhood Ventures
- New Development Corporation
- Professional Administrative Resources
- Re/Max Grand Valley
- Rental Property Owners Association
- Salvation Army Booth Family Services
- State Farm Insurance - Koorndyk Agency
- West Michigan Minority Contractors Association

Individual Members

- Joseph Amy
- Thomas Appel
- Peter & Glenna Armstrong
- Michael & Hilary Arthur
- Sophie Baker
- Stephanie Gingerich & Tony Baker
- Rebecca London & Mary Banghart
- Glenn Barkan
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- Karla Walker
- Michael Walton
- Larry & Lee Nelson Weber
- Lois White Tomasiewicz
- Jim Winslow
- John & Mary Zinkand
- Wendy Zuidema
- David Baak & Betty Zylstra

Save the Dates! Upcoming Fair Housing Events

Fair Housing: Strengthening the Fabric of Our Community

The 22nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon and Workshop Series will take place on **April 22, 2009** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. This premier fair housing event will celebrate 41 years of fair housing since the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, yet will also challenge the impediments to housing choice that continue to hinder the creation of healthy, sustainable, diverse communities throughout west Michigan. Please contact the FHCWM if you are interested in sponsoring and/or attending this significant event!

Fair Housing Book Club

The next Fair Housing Book Club discussion is scheduled for **March 26, 2009** at 11:45 am at the FHCWM office. This meeting will feature the novel, "No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement," by Joseph Shapiro. This novel combines powerful and thought-provoking stories with a compelling historical account of the disability rights movement. Bring a lunch and come join in the discussion!

Trainings

The **next fair housing training for rental professionals** will be on:

◆ **Tuesday, March 24, 2009**

5:30-8:30 pm, cost to attend is \$60

The next **fair housing advertising training** will be on:

◆ **Tuesday, May 5, 2009**

2:00-5:00 pm, cost to attend is \$100

These sessions will be held at the FHCWM office. Call Liz Keegan at (616) 451-2980 to register.

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 Regina Davis at (616) 451-2980.

www.fhcwm.org
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