

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

FAIR HOUSING CENTER OF WEST MICHIGAN



Opening Doors to  
Housing Choice

**About Us:**

*The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is a private, non-profit fair housing organization committed to providing comprehensive fair housing services, including education, outreach, research, advocacy, and enforcement. The Fair Housing Center is the front door to housing choice, ensuring that everyone in our community has equal opportunity to choose housing that's right for them. Through education, research and advocacy, we prevent housing discrimination, remove barriers that allow it to persist, and restore housing choice when discrimination happens.*

**Services and Programs Include:**

- *General information sessions/presentations*
- *Technical training on fair housing laws and practices*
- *One-on-one technical support via phone or email*
- *Annual community fair housing events and interactive workshop series*
- *Housing tester program to survey the market for housing discrimination*
- *Complaint filing and case management for alleged incidents of discrimination*
- *Mediation and resolution support for alleged incidents of discrimination*
- *Fact sheets, training resources, and more on our website*
- *Book club and other learning opportunities*

*Fair Housing Center of West Michigan:  
Opening Doors to Housing Choice*

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## 2017 Education & Outreach Data

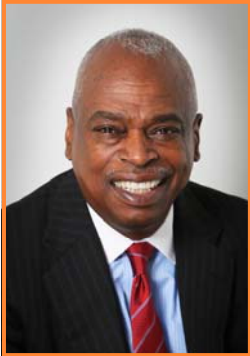
The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan’s education and outreach services provide housing consumers the awareness necessary to recognize and assert their fair housing rights and also empower the housing industry with the knowledge of the law in order to prevent future fair housing violations. In 2017 the Center provided comprehensive fair housing education and outreach services to 13,353 people throughout west Michigan and distributed over 36,682 fair housing materials, including brochures, guidebooks, newsletters, fact sheets, press releases, and more.

### 30th Annual Luncheon and Workshop Series

The 30th Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series took place on April 27, 2017 at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids. The theme was “Opening Doors to Housing Choice” to commemorate the FHCWM’s 30th year hosting this growing event. The morning workshops were:

- Putting Out The Welcome Mat for Seniors
- Ensuring Fair Housing in Today’s Market
- Hot Topics in Fair Housing: Sales and Lending Legal Update

This year’s workshops featured panels of national and local experts with a record number of **310** housing industry and community members in attendance. The luncheon, attended by more than 480 guests, began with a moving poetry performance of “An Open Door”,



*Wade Henderson*

by Rachel Gleason, weaving together the emotions and complexities that surround the idea of home, awareness of privilege, and making self-observations that encourage those who have not encountered discrimination to consider the experiences of others. The 2017 Fair Housing Award for Outstanding Effort by an Individual was then presented to Suzanne Schulz, Planning Director for the City of Grand Rapids. Ms. Schulz understands the importance of making room for all voices to be heard and has worked tirelessly to imbue the principals of access and equity into everything that she does. Executive Director Nancy Haynes introduced the keynote speaker,



*Rachel Gleason*



*Suzanne Schulz*

Wade Henderson, long-time President & CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCR). Mr. Henderson spoke on his experience as a civil rights lawyer and his life’s work to address systemic and individual cases of discrimination and injustice. On reflecting the importance of fair housing, Mr. Henderson shared the importance of why where you live matters, “of all the work you do, one of the fundamental takeaways is where you decide to live, or in some cases where someone else decides where you should live, is the single most important variable that effects your civil and human rights”.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing



Amy Nelson

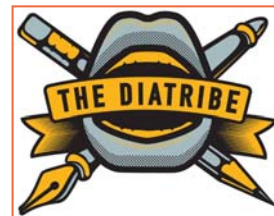
On October 5, 2017, the Center hosted its 11th annual *Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing* breakfast event at Baker Lofts in Holland. Lakeshore Advisory and Board Member, Dave Stellin, welcomed 126 breakfast attendees. The Center's Education & Outreach Director Liz Keegan presented the *Lakeshore Fair Housing Award* to Anna Bednarek (Community Development Coordinator, Community Mental Health of Ottawa County) for her passionate commitment to and active advocacy for fair housing. Keynote speaker Amy Nelson, Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI), discussed predatory rent-to-own contracts, and the increase of threats and intimidation against neighbors and home seekers, as well as the success of FHCCI's "No Hate, Just Love" campaign.

## Fair Housing Trainings

During 2017, the Fair Housing Center continued to develop and provide a wide range of fair housing curricula and trainings for over 1,650 housing professionals and conducted 58 fair housing trainings and presentations for various groups, including non-profit organizations, landlords, property managers, condominium associations, lenders, real estate sales professionals, municipal employees, social service agencies, and home-seekers. The Center collaborated with many organizations to provide targeted information to members of the housing industry about their responsibilities under fair housing laws as well as best practices to help ensure compliance.

## Fair Housing Classroom & Book Club

The Center provided innovative fair housing education across west Michigan through a special program initiative and the book clubs. The Center embarked on an educational pilot program in partnership with local poetry collective, The Diatribe, that was well received by 21 tenth grade students at CA Frost High School. This program helped students better understand fair housing and encouraged them to think about how *where* a person lives determines *how* they live. Due to the success and innovative nature of the pilot, the Center has been asked to introduce this exciting initiative to other classrooms and looks forward to sharing this program in 2018!



The Center has hosted its Book Club since 2008, reading and discussing novels and non-fiction books that highlight issues with fair housing implications and bringing greater awareness of fair housing to our region. The Book Clubs met 6 times in 2017, with locations in Grand Rapids and Holland, and featured 5 books. Some of the 2017 selections include Detroit Hustle, Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City, and Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood. A full summary of all of the Book Club Selections to date is available at [www.fhcwm.org/booksweveread](http://www.fhcwm.org/booksweveread).

## Complaints and Casework

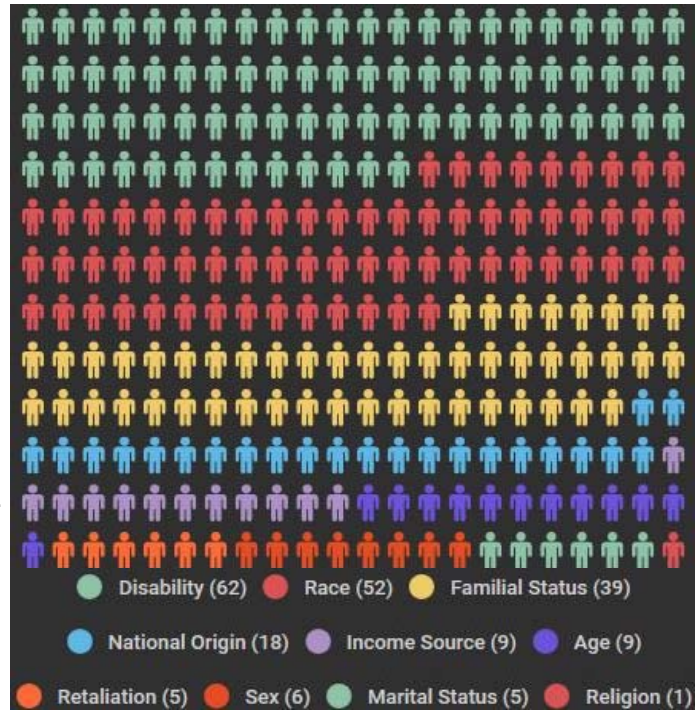
In 2017, the Fair Housing Center managed a total of 253 fair housing cases, 168 of which were newly initiated in 2017. The 168 cases initiated resulted from 206 allegations received throughout 2017. These allegations pertained to people and/or property within 37 different municipalities throughout west Michigan, spanning 15 different counties. **See chart at right for distribution of allegations by the protected basis.** Of the 168 cases, 121 were initiated by individual clients or anonymous bona fide allegations, while the remaining 47 were agency-initiated as a result of the Center's independent research or investigation.

The cases managed in 2017 continued to highlight systemic barriers to fair housing choice, specifically on the bases of disability, race, and familial status. This past year, disability represented the most common basis of cases handled and refusal to make a reasonable accommodation/modification is one of the most prevalent allegations handled by the Center.

As a result of casework and investigation, the Center resolved and closed a total of 193 cases in 2017, which included the closure of 129 of the 168 cases initiated in 2017. The resolution of those cases benefitted 824 people. Through research, investigation, mediation and advocacy, the Center:

- helped 23 people obtain a reasonable accommodation or modification to obtain access and full use of their homes;
- filed 23 complaints with the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, 8 of which were filed on behalf of a client;
- referred 3 cases to cooperating attorneys;
- settled/conciliated 9 cases;
- monitored 16 settlement agreements;
- prompted 25 housing providers to modify their policies/practices to comply with the law;
- resolved 45 cases of discriminatory policies against families with children;
- helped 23 people to retain safe, affordable housing; and
- opened 10,601 units up from discrimination, 801 of those units specifically for Seniors.

2017 Allegations by Protected Class



These numbers demonstrate that continued enforcement work is necessary to ensure equal housing opportunity throughout west Michigan.

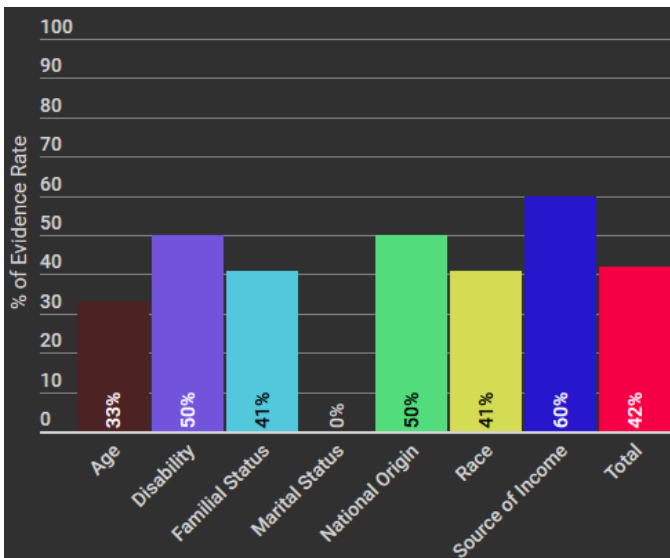
Highlighted Cases

**17-118:** A family contacted the Center about a reasonable accommodation request. The family was living in a large three bedroom 2nd floor of an apartment complex. The family's younger daughter was diagnosed with spina bifidia and her physical disabilities were greater than what the family expected and therefore their 2nd floor apartment was becoming less accessible for her. The family, as a reasonable accommodation, requested a transfer to an accessible unit or permission to break their current lease without penalty. After the family was unsuccessful in getting any reasonable accommodation they contacted the Center. The Center reached out to the housing provider and was able to secure a reasonable accommodation for the family to break their lease with no penalty. A few short weeks later the family moved into their accessible 1st floor apartment.

**17-020:** On September 14, 2017 the Center entered into a settlement agreement with a property management company to resolve claims of illegal housing discrimination on the basis of familial status. The agreement resolved an administrative complaint filed by the Center alleging that the Respondent's occupancy standard of "two persons per bedroom" unlawfully limited housing choice for families with children. The settlement agreement included the following terms, among others: Respondent revised their occupancy policies at all 31 properties that they managed within Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois and Respondent's employees attended fair housing training.

Testing

Evidence Rate in Conclusive 2017 Testing by Basis



Throughout 2017, the Center conducted 261 fair housing tests involving people or property in over 35 municipalities throughout west Michigan. These tests were conducted in order to investigate the status of equal treatment and fair housing practices throughout the housing industry. Of these tests, 164 were conducted in response to bona fide allegations of housing discrimination, while the remaining 97 were conducted as market survey or as part of a systemic investigation. The Center detected evidence of significant differences at the rate of 42% overall in conclusive testing.

The Center conducted the 261 tests on the following bases: age (3), disability (28), familial status (105), marital status (1), national origin (8), and race (111). Consistent with past findings, the Center detected substantial rates of evidence of unequal treatment across several protected bases. Throughout 2017, the Center has seen high evidence rate in the following federal protected classes: disability (50%); National origin (50%) familial status (41%) and race (41%).

## 2017 Membership Drive

Carol Townsend was this year's Membership Drive Chairwoman. Thanks to our member's VERY generous support, the 2017 drive raised over \$15,000 for the Center's Education & Outreach programs and efforts!

### Supporting Members

- Michelle Behrenwald
- John Hunting
- Tim Reimink
- Marilyn Titcher
- Macatawa Bank
- Mercantile Bank

### Corporate Members

- Ameen Consulting & Associates
- Bayberry Pointe Apartments
- Brooks Capital Management LLC
- City of Grand Rapids Office of Inclusion and Diversity
- Elzinga & Volkers
- Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit
- Fifth Third Bank
- Greater Regional Alliance of REALTORS
- Heartland Builders
- Holland Home
- Independent Bank
- Irwin Seating Co. Land & Company
- Patriot Realty
- Red Oak Management
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- West Michigan Community Bank
- Yesterdog

### Business Members

- Aquinas College Community Leadership Program
- Brookmeadow Apartments
- Burton's Landing Apartments
- Coldwell Banker AJS Schmidt/David & Mary Mapes - Realtors
- Cooper's Landing Apartments
- Crossroads Apartments
- Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids, Inc.
- Fieldstone Apartments
- Grand Rapids Housing Commission
- HHI Management Company
- Hidden Creek Community, LLC
- Hidden Springs LLC
- High Pointe Apartments
- Lakeshore Rescue Mission/Holland Rescue Mission
- Terri Land
- Lighthouse Property Management
- Management Business Solutions
- Manus Properties
- MCT & Company
- Michigan REALTORS
- Miller Real Estate
- North Pointe Apartments
- Oakview Apartments
- Parkcrest Apartments
- Peppercorn Apartments
- Prairie Creek Apartments
- Rental Property Owners Association
- State Farm Insurance Koorndyk Agency
- The Salvation Army Social Services of Kent County
- Commissioner Jim Talen
- Thomas Classrooms & Modularity LLC—Julie Anne Thomas
- Urban Pharm LLC
- Wimbledon Apartments
- Woodfield Apartments
- York Creek Apartments



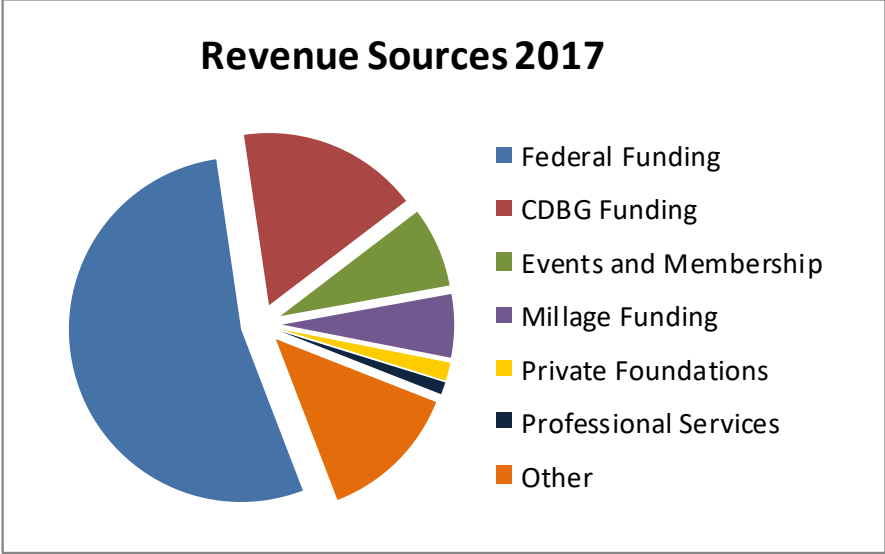
## Individual Members

- Zahabia Ahmed-Usmani
- Peter Armstrong
- David Baak & Betty Zylstra
- Sophie Baker
- Chris & Janice Barbee
- Kay Behrenwald
- Lou Berra
- Howard & Valerie Best
- Bryan Bickford
- Guy & Kim Bickford
- Nancy Bierenga
- Rosalynn Bliss
- Roman & Connie Bohatch
- Rhae-Ann Booker
- Joannie Bouman
- Jonathan & Grace Bradford
- Susan Broman
- Mary Bueche
- Milinda Ysasi & Rafael Castanon
- Susan Cervantes
- Rick & Willow Chapla
- Bridget Clark
- Tracie Coffman
- Phil Behem & Janeth Andrea Hennrich Coray
- Donna Cornwell
- Kay Courtney
- Kim Cross
- Andrea Crumback
- Leslie Curry
- Joe & Linda Czarnik
- David Czurak
- Sylvia Daining
- Marc Daneman
- Al Dannenberg
- Kayla Doshier
- DeCarto & Patrice Draper
- Annie Edwards
- Anne Faasse
- Robert & Lynne Frey
- Twink Frey
- Daniel Grzywacz
- Andy & Sue Harder
- Nancy Haynes
- Lynn Heemstra
- Gail Gunst & Kenneth Heffner
- Carol Hennessy
- Mike & Mary Hogan
- Preston & Sylvia Hopson
- Phil Hoskin
- Mandy Zweifel-Hughes & DJ Hughes
- Jody Immink
- Win & Kyle Irwin
- Shellie Jeffries
- BettyBeth Johns
- Liz Keegan
- Ralph & Ruby Kickert
- JoAnn King
- Ronald & Bonnie Kopp
- James & Helen Lehman
- Tim Lemanski
- Mary Libby
- Thomas Logan
- Patrick & Debbie Lonergan
- Mike Lorr
- Rhonda Lubberts
- Steve Maas
- Julie Malta
- Harold & Angie Mast
- Brian Matzke
- Cheryl McKinney
- Allison Mehlmann
- Patrick & Shirley Miles
- William & Pamela Murphy
- Alice O'Connor
- H. Rhett & Jeralyn Pinsky
- Dennis & Carol Preston
- Rand Putterman
- Lyn Raymond
- Ryan & Sara Schmidt
- Jay Schrimpf
- Suzanne Schulz
- John & Sarah Smith
- Sharon Smith
- Christina Soulard
- Ruth Stevens & Thomas Stellard
- Bill & Judy Stellin
- Dave Stellin
- Andrew & Elizabeth Stoddard
- Lisa Burlingame & Scott Stuart
- Kathleen Feeney & John Stuiwe
- Jim & Lawren Susan
- Sue Swanlund
- Thomas Syrek
- Roger & Jane Thompson
- Hattie Tinney
- Carol Townsend
- Kristi Turchan
- Ann Tuttle
- Brian Tuttle
- Corinne Vanderspek
- Kenneth Vanhaaften
- Larry & Lee Nelson Weber
- Elizabeth Welch
- Casey & Lucia White
- Mike & Mary Alice Williams
- Jack Woller
- Troy Zapolski

MEMBERS

Visit [www.fhcwm.org/giving](http://www.fhcwm.org/giving) to become a member if you are not one already!

2017 Financial Report



The Fair Housing Center received \$794,289.20 in revenue in 2017. Just over 53% of the revenue came from federal grants with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Fair Housing Initiatives Program for the Private Enforcement Initiative and the Education and Outreach Initiative; 17% came from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) contracts or other federal contracts with the County of Kent, and the Cities of Holland, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores and Wyoming; 6% came from a contract under the Kent County Senior Millage; and 2% from private foundation grants. The grants and contracts are used to fund education, enforcement and advocacy services, compliance monitoring, and administrative services.



The Center held two (2) major events in 2017, the 30th Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series in April to celebrate Fair Housing Month and the 11th Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing breakfast event, which, when combined with membership contributions, accounted for 8% of the total revenue for the year. Contracted professional services, including trainings and other fair housing services, and other income, such as investment interest and settlements, accounted for the remaining 14% of the revenue in 2017.

Program service costs, including, but not limited to, staffing, supplies, contract services, professional services, and printing, represented approximately 84% of the total expenses in 2017. Other operating expenses represented approximately 10% and event and membership expenses represented 8% of the total expenses in 2017.

### Lakeshore Advisory Board

**PRESIDENT, Sue Harder**, City of Holland  
**Reatha Anderson**, NAACP of Muskegon  
**Bree Austin-Roberts**, Disability Network Lakeshore  
**Phil Coray**, Alliance for Cultural & Ethnic Harmony  
**Bob Dunn**, Keller Williams Realty  
**Gail Harrison**, Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance  
**Leroy Hernandez**, Macatawa Resource Center  
**Jody Immink**, community member  
**Tim Lemanski**, community member  
**Mary Libby**, Coldwell Banker Woodland Schmidt  
**Dave Stellin**, Lake Michigan Credit Union  
**Lyn Raymond**, Lakeshore Housing Alliance  
**Ben VanderWoude**, BVW Property Management  
**Amber VerBurg**, Safe Title, Inc.



### Executive Board of Directors

**PRESIDENT, Doretha Ardoin**, Greenridge Realty  
**VICE PRESIDENT, Tim Reimink**, Crowe Horwath  
**TREASURER, Ryan VanderMeer**, Urban Pharm  
**SECRETARY, Sharon Smith**, Aquinas College

### Board of Directors

**Michelle Behrenwald**, Inspired Design  
**Rhae-Ann Booker**, Davenport University  
**Susan Cervantes**, Area Community Services Employment & Training (ACSET)  
**Andrea Crumback**, Mika Meyers, PLC  
**Floriza Genautis**, Management Business Solutions  
**Dan Koorndyk**, State Farm Insurance/ Kent County Commission  
**Hon. Benjamin Logan**, Retired  
**Patrick Lonergan**, Fifth Third Bank  
**Sarah Lucas**, Networks Northwest  
**Jon O'Connor**, First Ward Commissioner, City of Grand Rapids  
**John Smith**, Legal Aid of Western Michigan  
**Dave Stellin**, Lake Michigan Credit Union  
**Kristin Turkelson**, City of Grand Rapids Planning Dept.  
**Troy Zapolski**, Land & Company



### Staff

**Nancy Haynes**, Executive Director  
**Liz Keegan**, Director of Education and Outreach  
**Elizabeth Stoddard**, Director of Advocacy  
**Gabe Chapla**, Test Coordinator  
**Mandy Zweifel-Hughes**, Fair Housing Specialist II  
**George Jeffries**, Fair Housing Specialist I / Office Coordinator  
**Madelaine Clapp**, Education and Outreach Coordinator



*Preventing and eliminating illegal housing discrimination  
and ensuring equal housing opportunity through  
education, outreach, research, advocacy, and enforcement.*



**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)

Serving the Michigan counties of Allegan, Grand Traverse, Ionia,  
Isabella, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana,  
Osceola and Ottawa.