



# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

## Fair Housing & Communities of Opportunity

### Fair Housing Center Plans 27th Annual Event for May 22nd

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is very pleased to announce that **Sara Pratt**, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Enforcement and



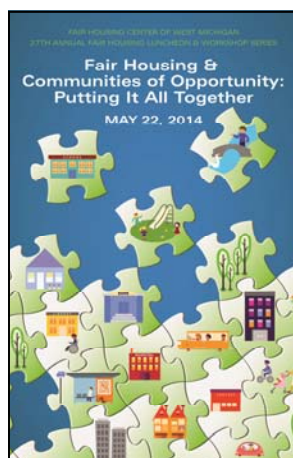
Programs at HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, will be the keynote speaker for the *27th Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series* on **Thursday, May 22, 2014** at the Crowne

Plaza Hotel. She will be speaking about the role that fair housing plays in creating and sustaining communities of opportunity. The FHCWM will offer three concurrent morning workshops from 8:45-11:45 am; the Luncheon begins at noon.

The **Planning Together to Foster Inclusive Communities** workshop will provide information on HUD's proposed Affirmatively Further Fair Housing (AFFH) Rule, which was drafted in order to aid in the development of community planning informed by fair housing. Under the proposed rule, state and local jurisdictions that receive direct Community Development Block Grant funding and public housing agencies would be provided with a clear definition of what it means to

affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH); a standardized assessment process with supporting data; and guidance and technical assistance under a new proposed rule. This workshop will cover the proposed changes under the new rule as well as practical guidance and meaningful actions to meet the obligation to AFFH; the workshop will also provide opportunities for dialogue on creative approaches and opportunities to not only meet, but exceed the obligation. The panel will be anchored by a presentation from Sheryl Whitney, a HUD contractor with almost two decades of experience with King County in Washington.

The **Joining Together to Promote Choice for Seniors and People with Disabilities** workshop will focus on reasonable accommodations and



modifications that enable people to 'age in place' in housing that meets their needs. This workshop will feature an overview of the laws and other guidance available on these and related topics including assistance animals; case examples; and hands-on exercises to increase familiarity in handling requests for accommodations and modifications.

Panelists include Maurice McGough (HUD); Jim McCarthy (Miami Valley Fair Housing Center); Kim Cross (Dwelling Place); and Elizabeth Stoddard (FHCWM). This workshop is made possible through the support of the Kent County Senior Millage.



The **Working Together to Enhance Neighborhood Opportunity** workshop will build on the real estate owned (REO) properties session held last year, which focused on one of the devastating outcomes of the foreclosure crisis – the vacant and poorly maintained REO properties marring once vibrant neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods of color. A settlement and collaborative commitment provided funds for investment in neighborhoods of color impacted by the crisis in 19 cities, including Grand Rapids. Panelists will discuss local efforts underway that assist in stabilizing and enhancing our neighborhoods by building on existing assets and leveraging new opportunities.

#### Inside this issue:

27th Annual Fair Housing Event .....	1
2014 Award Nominations.....	2
Sec. 8 Occupancy Standards.....	2
2013 FHCWM Members .....	3
Grand Haven Area Grant.....	4
Fair Housing Book Clubs .....	4

# ...FHCWM Notes & News...

## **Section 8 Occupancy Changes do NOT Change Private Housing Laws**

The FHCWM has received several inquiries relevant to the changes implemented, or to be implemented, by administrators of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program regarding occupancy limit standards. The FHCWM understands that, due to funding limitations and budget cuts, local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and others that manage Section 8 Vouchers have done away with, or will be doing away with, discretionary policies regarding occupancy and defer to the “two heartbeats per room” occupancy standard when determining a family’s eligibility for a particular unit size and Voucher amount. **However, these programmatic changes do not in any way alter or limit fair housing laws regarding familial status discrimination or occupancy limitations in the housing market.**

The FHCWM confirmed that HUD has not issued any new rule or regulation regarding occupancy, but rather that the “two heartbeats per room” limit has always applied to Section 8 and Public Housing programs. However, the HUD regulations have allowed/continue to allow Voucher administrators, such as PHAs (housing commissions) and MSHDA, discretion to broaden eligibility criteria based upon availability of funds. For example, a family of three made up by a single mother with a teenage daughter and teenage son would qualify for a two-bedroom unit under the “two heartbeats per room” limit; however, a PHA can broaden qualification criteria to take the ages and genders of the family members into account and approve the family for a three-bedroom unit. Due to budget cuts, rather than reduce the number of Vouchers or program participants, PHAs across the nation are choosing to cut costs by no longer exercising automatic policies that allow families the option of a larger unit size based on family make-up. Where the example family might have previously qualified for a three-bedroom unit, upon Voucher renewal under the changes they may only qualify for a two-bedroom unit.

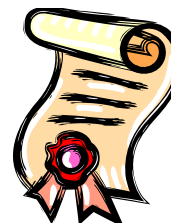
## **It is very important to note that:**

- this occupancy limit change is only relevant to program-related Section 8 qualification criteria, and has no bearing on the rules and regulations applicable to the housing market
- these changes in PHA practices do not in any way suggest that it is always legal for a housing provider to limit occupancy to two people per bedroom
- occupancy limitations should be no more restrictive than local health and safety standards or other governmental restrictions that limit the maximum number of occupants within a dwelling based on the unit size and configuration
- housing providers should continue to defer to HUD’s guidance in the Keating Memo for specific information on familial status discrimination and occupancy limitations (see Publications on our website)

An individual could file a fair housing complaint challenging a housing provider’s two people per bedroom policy if they believe the property or unit can legally house more than two people in a bedroom. This is why we strongly recommend that housing providers become familiar with the Keating Memo, the local occupancy codes and allowable occupancy within their properties based on size and configuration in order to reduce the risk of receiving a fair housing complaint and ensure compliance with the familial status protections of the federal Fair Housing Act.

## **2014 Fair Housing Awards: Nominations Needed**

It’s that time of year again! Please consider submitting a nomination for an individual or organization for a Fair Housing Award to be presented at the May 22nd luncheon. Selection is based upon a demonstrated commitment to fair housing. Please fill out the enclosed nomination form and return it to the Center through mail, fax or email by **April 14, 2014**. You may submit more than one nomination. Thank you to all who nominated such worthy community members in 2013 for the Fair Housing Award. We really value your input!



## **In Memoriam**

The FHC has lost a long-time friend and board member. Ira Hart passed away on December 23, 2013. We are thankful for the many years of unflagging support and wisdom he shared with us.



*Ira with Nancy Haynes in 2011.*



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of West Michigan**  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49507

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# Thank You 2013 FHCWM Members

**THANK YOU SO MUCH  
to all of our 2013  
members!**

**Because of your generous  
support, we exceeded our  
2013 Membership Goal of  
raising over \$13,000 for  
FHCWM education and  
outreach programs!**

## **Special Thanks to Our Supporting Members**

- ChoiceOne Bank
- Hope Network
- John Hunting
- Macatawa Bank
- Marilyn Titche
- Mercantile Bank

of Michigan  
Lakeshore Association of  
Realtors

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- Company
- Phoenix Properties
- Red Oak Mgmt. Co., Inc.
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- West MI Community Bank

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- Bayberry Apts, LLC
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- Georgetown Apartments
- Burton's Landing Apts

- Cooper's Landing Apts
- Courtney & Abraham
- Properties
- Crossroads Apartments &
- Dunbar Apartments
- Dwelling Place of Grand
- Rapids, Inc.
- Fieldstone Apartments
- Five Star Real Estate
- Good Samaritan Ministries
- Habitat for Humanity

Kent County

- Hidden Spring LLC
- High Pointe Apartments
- Lakeshore Rescue Mission
- Holland Rescue Mission
- LINC Community
- Revitalization Inc.
- Manus Properties LLC
- North Pointe Apartments
- Jeffrey O'Hara
- Oakview Apartments &
- Southview Apartments
- Parkcrest Apartments
- Partners for a Racism

Free Community

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- Peppercorn & Oakhill Apts
- Prairie Creek Apartments
- Safe Title, Inc.
- State Farm/

Koorndyk Agency

- The Gordon Group GR, LLC
- The Grand Rapids
- Housing Commission
- Thomas Classrooms &
- Modulars LLC
- Tipping Point Initiative
- United Growth for Kent Co
- Urban Pharm, LLC
- West MI Therapy, Inc.
- Wimbledon & Heritage Apts
- Woodfield Apartments/
- Woodfield, LLC
- York Creek Apartments

### **Individual Members**

- Lorena Aguayo-Marquez
- Tom Appel
- Peter Armstrong
- Mike & Hilary Arthur
- Jean Baird
- Sean & Lauren Baker
- Sophie Baker
- Glenn Barkan
- Judith Barnes
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- Anna Bednarek
- Michelle Behrenwald
- Louis Berra
- Howard & Valerie Best
- Guy & Kim Bickford
- Bert & Janet Bleke
- Martha Boks
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- Joel & Erin Dye
- Annie Edwards
- Dave & Kathie Feldpausch
- Eric Webster &
- Elizabeth Foster
- Stephanie Gingerich
- Dan Grzywacz
- Gail Harrison
- Lynn Heemstra
- Gail & Ken Heffner
- Terri Land & Dan Hibma
- Susan & David Hoekema
- Mary & Mike Hogan
- Preston Hopson
- Phil Hoskin
- Will & Kyle Irwin
- Paul & Elaine Isely
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- Casey & Lucia White
- Mike & Mary Alice
- Williams
- Troy Zapolski
- Betty Zylstra

*Thank you to our 2013  
Membership Co-Chairs,  
Mindy Ysasi Castañon and  
Judy Barnes!!*



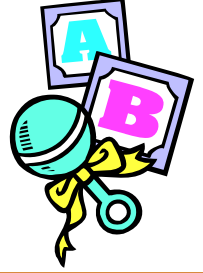
# ...FHCWM News & Events...

## **Fair Housing Education for Families with Children programs receives Grand Haven Area Grant!**

The Youth Fund of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation has awarded the FHCWM a grant for \$3,875 to provide fair housing education for families with children, which will include readings of The Fair Housing Five & The Haunted House and sessions of the Housing Choice Game workshop!

## **Congratulations!**

*The FHCWM is pleased to introduce our newest member! Grace Stoddard was born on March 2, 2014 to proud parents Elizabeth and Andrew Stoddard and big brother Jonah. Elizabeth is our Director of Advocacy.*



## **Fair Housing Book Club**

The Grand Rapids Book Club will meet on Tuesday, **March 25, 2014** to discuss The Elegance of the Hedgehog Muriel Barbery. We will meet in our office (20 Hall SE). The Lakeshore Book Club will meet on Wednesday, **April 2, 2014** to discuss The Autobiography of a Recovering Skinhead by Frank Meeink. We will meet at the Disability Network Lakeshore office (426 Century Lane, Holland). Every meeting begins at 11:45 am; please RSVP to Liz Keegan at (616) 451-2980. Bring a lunch, bring a friend and join the discussion!

## **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 Gabe Chapla at (616) 451-2980.

[www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org)  
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20 HALL STREET SE GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49507  
616/451-2980 fax 616/451-2657

## 2014 FAIR HOUSING AWARDS

The Fair Housing Center is a private, non-profit organization established in 1980 to ensure equal access to housing opportunity in west Michigan. The Center carries out its mission through enforcement and education programs based on Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, "the *Fair Housing Act*," which prohibits discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or the presence of children in the family in the sale, rental, advertising, financing, or representation of housing. Similar state and local laws further prohibit housing discrimination based on marital status, age, source of income, and sexual orientation.

Each year the Center sponsors a *Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series*. The Center presents Fair Housing Awards at the luncheon, which will be held May 22, 2014. This year we hope to give *Fair Housing Awards* to individuals, businesses and/or organizations that have made significant contributions to the progress of open housing in West Michigan. In the past, the awards have been presented to:

- 2013 Sue Ortiz; Kendra Vanderlip
- 2012 Holly Sturges (Fair Housing Advocate Award); Chemical Bank
- 2011 Kimberly Spring; Land & Co.
- 2010 Krystle Gist; Michigan Department of Civil Rights
- 2009 Judy Barnes of the Home & Building Association of Greater Grand Rapids; Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan
- 2008 Joel Dye of City of Holland; Michigan Association of Realtors
- 2007 Dave Allen of Lighthouse Communities; Home Repair Services; JP Morgan Chase; Curtis Sall of Hearthstone Development - Lakeshore
- 2006 Donald Pruss, in memoriam; Betty Zylstra; Grand Rapids Association of Realtors; Gail Harrison - Lakeshore
- 2005 Lou Berra; Bill Hoyt & the City of Grand Rapids Planning Department; Heartland Builders
- 2004 Ruth Jones; Kathi Harris & Fred Mackraz
- 2003 Jack Hoffman; Disability Advocates - David Bulkowski (Executive Director)
- 2002 Robert Upton, Grand Rapids Equal Opportunity Dept., WZZM Channel 13 - Chris Tye
- 2001 Charlotte Anderson; Cities of Grand Rapids, Kentwood and Wyoming
- 2000 Jeanine Bryant; Denny Sturtevant, Executive Director of Dwelling Place
- 1999 Lee Nelson Weber, former Executive Director
- 1998 Mick McGraw, Eastbrook Builders
- 1997 Richard Arasmith, former member, Board of Directors
- 1996 Carol Townsend, founding member
- 1995 Zoraida Sanchez, former member, Board of Directors
- 1994 Minority Realtors Action Group
- 1993 Bill Hardiman; Paul Mayhue; Ann Schreuder-Kelly; John Markosky

As a Member, a Board Member and/or a supporter of fair housing, you are invited to submit suggestions for the Fair Housing Award to that committee by **April 14, 2014**. Selection for the Fair Housing Award is based upon a demonstrated commitment to fair housing. This commitment is evidenced by:

- Demonstrated leadership within the fair housing effort
- Economic, Social and/or Political impact in the community which has encouraged diversity and housing opportunities for all
- Past efforts raising awareness in the community about fair housing and other issues pertinent to providing equal housing opportunity for all
- Demonstrated accomplishments in fair housing efforts

To nominate an individual and/or an organization, please complete the back of this form. You may submit as many nominations as you see fit. Selection(s) will be made by the Events Committee according to their consideration of the contributions demonstrated and described, and their relationship to the mission and goals of the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan.

**NOMINATION FORM**

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_  
(Individual or Organization)

Address of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Affiliation (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe this nominee’s contribution to the progress of open housing based upon the stated criteria:

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\*\*\*Return this form to the FHCWM by **4/14/14** via fax (616-451-2657)  
or mail (20 Hall Street SE; Grand Rapids, MI 49507) \*\*\*