



# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

Volume I — 2019

## Exciting Plans for Fair Housing Event & Poetry Slam Contest

### Event to Feature Student Poets, Unique Workshops!

The FHCWM is busy finalizing plans for the *32nd Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series* on **Thursday, April 25, 2019** at the **Amway Grand Plaza Hotel** in downtown Grand Rapids. The theme is “Fair Housing: Moving to Housing Equity”. **Lisa Rice**, President and CEO



of the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), will provide the keynote

presentation. NFHA is the nation’s only national civil rights agency solely dedicated to eliminating all forms of housing discrimination. Ms. Rice is a nationally recognized expert in fair housing; she also is a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Board of Directors, JPMorgan Chase Consumer Advisory Council, Mortgage Bankers Association’s Consumer Advisory Council, Freddie Mac Affordable Housing Advisory Council, Urban Institute’s Mortgage Servicing Collaborative, Quicken Loans Advisory Committee, and America’s Homeowner Alliance Advisory Board.

This year’s luncheon will also feature a must-see poetry performance by winners of the **2019 Fair Housing Poetry Slam Contest**.

Grand Rapids Public School students will be competing and two students will be chosen by FHCWM partners/poets **Rachel Gleason** and Grand Rapids Poet Laureate **Marcel ‘Fable’ Price**.



**Workshops** - There are 3 morning workshops to choose from. Tonika Johnson (Resident Association of Greater Englewood) will anchor a workshop to share her powerful multimedia project, “Folded Map”, which illustrates Chicago’s residential segregation while bringing residents together for a conversation. “Folded Map” is a visual investigation of Chicago’s communities, using the grid system to identify and directly compare photographs and videos of North and South side blocks, such as the 6900 block of North Ashland in Rogers Park and the 6900 block of South Ashland in West Englewood.

Fred Freiberg (Fair Housing Justice Center) and Amy Nelson (Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana) will be joined by the FHCWM’s Elizabeth Stoddard in a workshop dedicated to highlighting recent fair housing case settlements and current systemic incidents and trends of housing discrimination.

Marisa Novara (Metropolitan Planning Council) will anchor the third workshop and share information about the Cost of Segregation project, which she designed and manages. This project is evaluating what communities pay in lost income, lives, and potential – in other words, the steep costs all in the Chicago region pay by living so separately from each other. If metro Chicago were less segregated, it could see \$4.4 billion in additional income each year, a 30% lower homicide rate and 83,000 more bachelor’s degrees. She will also share information from the policy and action plans they have developed, the Roadmaps to Equity.

Learn more and stay tuned for more details/registration at [fhcwm.org/lws](http://fhcwm.org/lws). Tickets for a workshop AND lunch are \$75; tickets for a workshop OR lunch are \$45. Call our office to learn about hardship discounts. We have full scholarships available for Kent County seniors.

### 2019 Fair Housing Award

We are seeking award nominations for the Fair Housing Award to be presented on April 25. For details and nomination forms please visit: [www.fhcwm.org/lws/awards](http://www.fhcwm.org/lws/awards).

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## National Fair Housing News

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced that the owners and agent of an apartment complex in Syracuse, New York, will pay \$15,000 under a HUD Consent Order resolving allegations that they refused to allow a woman with mental disabilities to keep an assistance animal. The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing providers from denying or limiting housing to persons with disabilities and from refusing to make reasonable accommodations in policies or practices, which includes denying assistance animal requests.

"People who rely on assistance animals to maintain their independence shouldn't have their right to housing accommodations unlawfully denied," said Anna María Farías, HUD's Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. HUD's Charge of Discrimination alleged that after the tenant brought the animal home, an agent confronted her about the animal and refused to make an exception to their "no-pets" policy, even after the woman provided documentation attesting to her disabilities. HUD's Charge further alleged that the landlords initiated a retaliatory eviction action against the tenant after she made the accommodation request, in violation of the Fair Housing Act. Under the terms of the Consent Order, entered by a HUD administrative law judge, the apartment owners will pay \$15,000 to the woman, undergo fair housing training, and create a reasonable accommodation policy that allows residents with disabilities to keep assistance animals, including emotional support animals.

### FHCWM Impact Demonstrated in 2018 Annual Report

In 2018, the FHCWM provided education and outreach to 22,436 people and distributed 26,925 fair housing materials. Further, over 1,300 housing professionals received fair housing training and over 475 community members received fair housing rights training, including 230 elementary and high school students. The Center also managed a total of 204 fair housing cases, 145 of which were newly initiated in 2018. The 145 cases resulted from 162 separate fair housing allegations and involved properties in 38 different municipalities spanning 17 counties. Also, the FHCWM conducted 202 fair housing tests in order to investigate housing discrimination and fair housing practices. Throughout 2018, the Center saw high evidence rates in testing on the following federal protected classes: disability—other than physical (50%); familial status (48%); national origin (33%) and race (31%). Visit [fhcwm.org/annualreports](http://fhcwm.org/annualreports) to view the full report.



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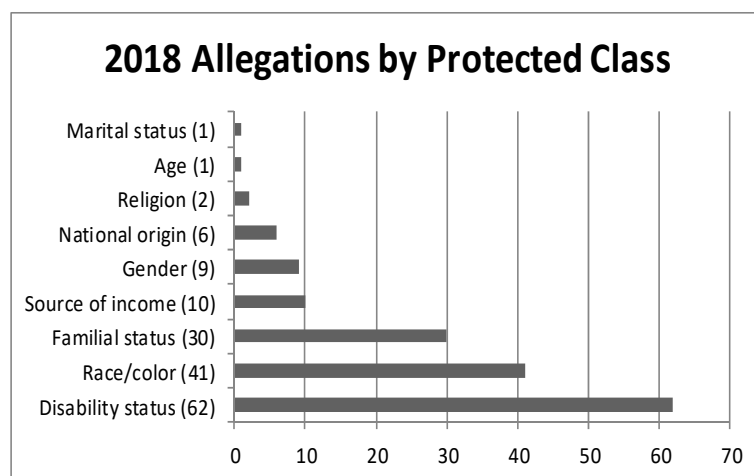
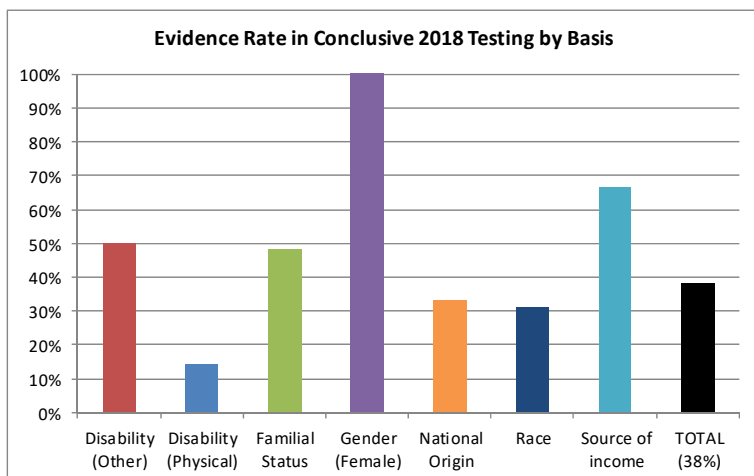
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**Protected classes under law include race, color, national origin, religion, family status, marital status, gender, age and disability.**

# Thank You to our 2018 Members!

Our members further fair housing efforts by providing much needed support for programs and services that would otherwise go unfunded. Because of their generous support, we exceeded our 2018 Membership Goal by 119% - raising over \$14,250 for FHCWM education and outreach programs!

## Special Thanks to Our Supporting Members

- Chemical Bank
- John Hunting
- Tim Reimink
- Marilyn Titcher
- Mercantile Bank

## Corporate Members

- Bayberry Pointe Apartments
- Brooks Capital Management LLC
- Central Michigan Association of REALTORS
- EnviroSafe, Inc.
- Goodrich Quality Theaters
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Greater Regional Alliance of REALTORS
- Holland Home
- Irwin Seating Company
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- Next Advance Training Systems
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- West Michigan Community Bank
- West Michigan Lakeshore Association of REALTORS

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*A special BIG thank you also to our 2018 Membership Co-Chairs, Julie Rietberg & Dale Zahn!*



Please visit our web site: [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org)

# ...Fair Housing Center News & Events...

## Thank you, Tim!

The FHCWM would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Board of Directors Member, Tim Reimink, for the many years of service that he has dedicated to the FHCWM. Tim first joined the FHCWM's "Housing Fair Housing" Capital Campaign Committee in 2006, helping the FHCWM to raise and/or leverage over \$1 million dollars to renovate our donated office. After joining the Board, Tim was an active Board Member who helped facilitate several rounds of strategic planning! He is also one of our generous Supporting Members and a consistent sponsor of FHCWM events.

Tim, we offer our heartfelt gratitude for your time, talents, and energy! Thank you very much!!

## Follow Us on Facebook!

Did you know? The FHCWM is posting information weekly on Facebook as we continue to share information on what is happening in the fair housing movement. Posts include case data on specific trends and/or protected classes; client stories and photos; book and movie recommendations; infographics, PSAs and much more. Please like and follow our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/fhcwm>.



## 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 Fair Housing Center; 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 Fair Housing Center hosts **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.

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