Over 500 Gather to Celebrate the 32nd Annual Event!
The Fair Housing Center is happy to announce that more than 515 people registered to attend the Annual Fair Housing Luncheon & Workshop Series on Thursday, April 25, 2019. This is the third year in a row that the Center had over 500 guests! The event kicked-off with three powerful morning workshops: Highlighting Fair Housing Cases: A Systematic Approach to Equity, Understanding the Impact of Segregation Through the Arts, and Lost Income, Lost Lives, and Lost Potential: The Many Costs of Segregation. This year, the Center welcomed Lisa Rice, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Fair Housing Alliance, as the lunch keynote speaker. Ms. Rice shared with the crowd different examples of how artificial intelligence-based advertising systems are flawed and often facial recognition technology can misidentify individuals, especially women of color. Ms. Rice ended her presentation with some potential solutions which included training for engineers, developers, and coders; increased networking between advocated and data analysts and tech professionals; and improved platforms/systems to remove bias.

A sincere thank you to all who attended to mark this special occasion, our sponsors who made the day possible, and our incredible workshop panelists and keynote speaker!

Powerful Poetry Performances by Fair Housing Poetry Contest Winners
During the luncheon, two Grand Rapids Public School students, Alayah Johnson and Quamain Range, performed original poems. They won the Center’s first ever Fair Housing Poetry Contest; students who entered had participated in the Center’s Writing to Right Wrongs (WRW) program. Alayah’s poem, titled My Hood, spoke on her experience with gentrification in her neighborhood. This moving poem focused on the culture and atmosphere that are lost when neighborhoods change. Quamain’s poem, titled On a Journey, shared his experience of what it was like growing up in his neighborhood, comparing it to a jungle. He ends his poem with an understanding of “why so many black boys want to move to the suburbs, to run away from the jungle, to raise their cubs in the plains.”

Through generous donations from the Center’s Board of Directors, students from Union High School, CA Frost Environmental Science Academy, and Ottawa Hills High School were able to attend the event and witness their classmates’ performances. They were all participants in the WRW curricula delivered by in partnership with teaching artists of The Diatribe.

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**2019 Membership Drive Kicks Off**

FHCWM Board of Directors members and long-time advocates, Michelle Behrenwald (President of Inspired Design) and Sharon Smith (Director of Career & Counseling Services at Aquinas College) successfully launched this year’s Membership Drive at the annual luncheon. Ms. Smith shared her experience with fair housing and why it matters. Ms. Behrenwald spoke to the importance of becoming a member, and provided a powerful call to action to the luncheon attendees, urging those to get involved. Membership dollars make it possible to take complaints, respond to requests for education and training, and conduct vital investigations without being limited by geographical or contractual constraints. The annual goal is to raise $12,000. Learn more and join online at [www.fhcwm.org/giving](http://www.fhcwm.org/giving).

**$4,416**

**$12,000**

**Membership Drive Progress to Date**

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**Fair Housing Workshop Series**

This year’s concurrent morning workshops were attended by a record-setting 325 housing professionals, community members, and advocates.

- **The Highlighting Fair Housing Cases: A Systemic Approach to Equity** workshop opened with case examples from the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana’s Executive Director, Amy Nelson. Fred Freiberg (Executive Director, Fair Housing Justice Center) joined the panel to talk about the role of systemic testing investigations and a brief overview of recent cases at the FHJC. The workshop ended with Elizabeth Stoddard (the Center’s Director of Advocacy) who spoke on how the Center uses enforcement trends to inform best practices and education efforts; she also shared the tools, guidebooks, and fact sheets the Center offers. Marlene Cain (Michigan Department of Civil Rights) moderated. This workshop offered 3 hours of Continuing Education for real estate professionals, and was made possible through the support of the City of Grand Rapids Community Development Department.

- **The Understanding the Impact of Segregation Through the Arts** workshop began with Tonika Johnson (Photographer and Activist), who presented her project called “Folded Map” and framed a conversation around segregation in neighborhoods. Ms. Johnson’s project focuses on the impact of housing segregation in Chicago, but overall speaks on the difference in neighborhood appearance even on the same street (north vs. south). She was joined by The Diatribe’s Marcel ‘Fable’ Price (Executive Director) and Rachel Gleason (Director of Education), who presented on the Writing to Right Wrongs program, including 3 live student poet performances. Gwen Moffitt (Michigan Department of Civil Rights) moderated. This workshop was made possible by Community Rebuilders.

- **The Lost Income, Lost Lives, Lost Potential: The Many Costs of Segregation** workshop opened with a presentation from Marisa Novara (Vice President, Metropolitan Planning Council), who shared the Metropolitan Planning Council’s roadmap to an equitable future, which began with a study that reported on the economic impact of racial segregation. The City of Grand Rapids’ Patti Caudill, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, and Stacy Stout, Assistant to the City Manager, joined the panel to share the historical perspective of the City and to discuss the City’s equity journey. Commissioner Joe Jones (Executive Director, Grand Rapids Urban League) gave an inspiring talk on “Love Matters”. Gabe Chapla (FHCWM Testing Coordinator) moderated. This session was made possible by the County of Kent.
Advertising Best Practices and Facebook Case Update

The Fair Housing Act (FHAct) and Michigan state law protect against housing discrimination based upon race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, disability status, marital status, and age; local ordinances also protect sexual orientation and source of income. Under law, housing discrimination includes discriminatory advertising.

Best practices for advertising might include:

- In advertisements, showings, and elsewhere, describe the physical attributes of a property and amenities, not the potential resident.
- Avoid words, phrases, symbols, photos, or visual aids that indicate preference, limitations, or discrimination based on any of the aforementioned protected classes.
- Use caution with discounts or promotions. For example, student discounts should apply regardless of age or familial status.
- Establish a consistent method of advertising properties you are listing. Use a broad range of media outlets.
- The directions used in advertisements should be free of reference to any landmarks or areas that could imply an unlawful discriminatory preference.
- If the ad uses human models, ensure that it is in a nondiscriminatory way. Ask these questions: "Are both sexes adequately represented?", "Are children adequately represented?", "Are minority populations represented in reasonable proportion to their population in the metropolitan area?", "Are models or model graphics of children and minorities being used for all and not just some properties listed?"
- The “Publisher’s Notice” should be included at the beginning of each Real Estate section of the newspaper.
- Include the Equal Housing Opportunities slogan, logo, or statement, available at FHCWM.org.
- When in doubt, don’t use a particular word or image, or contact the FHCWM before posting or publishing it.

Visit the FHCWM webpage for housing professionals (fhcwm.org/professionals) for more information including fair housing laws, HUD guidance, and best practices by topic in our publications section!

Facebook Case Update:

In March of 2018, the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and 3 member organizations filed a lawsuit against Facebook in federal court in New York City, alleging that Facebook’s advertising platform enables landlords and real estate brokers to exclude families with children, women, and other protected classes of people from receiving housing ads. The lawsuit alleged that Facebook has created pre-populated lists that make it possible for its housing advertisers to “exclude” (in Facebook terminology) home seekers from viewing or receiving rental or sales ads because of protected characteristics. Advertisers were allowed to exclude certain “interest” categories from receiving ads that are disability-based (e.g., people who are interested in disabled veterans or disabled parking permits) or national origin-based (e.g., people who are interested in English as a second language).

ProPublica bought dozens of rental housing ads on Facebook, but asked that they not be shown to certain categories of users, such as African Americans, mothers of high school kids, people interested in wheelchair ramps, Jews, expats from Argentina and Spanish speakers. Every single ad was approved within minutes. The only ad that took longer than 3 minutes to be approved by Facebook sought to exclude potential renters “interested in Islam, Sunni Islam and Shia Islam.” It was approved after 22 minutes.

In March of 2019, the Facebook case was settled. It was agreed that the NFHA and partner Fair Housing Centers will work with Facebook to develop an in-house fair housing training program and monitor Facebook’s advertising platform on a continual basis; Facebook will support programs that expand fair housing opportunities throughout the country. In addition, Facebook will establish a separate advertising portal, “HEC portal,” for advertisers seeking to create housing, employment, and credit ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Messenger. The portal will limit advertisers’ targeting abilities to prevent them from illegally discriminating. Facebook will also restructure its “Lookalike Audience” feature, which formerly allowed advertisers to target ads to Facebook users who were similar to an advertiser’s existing customers.

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The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under grants with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the City of Grand Rapids. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Government.

Please visit our web site: www.fhcwm.org
Save The Date!
The FHCWM invites you to mark your calendar for Wednesday, October 16, 2019 for our 13th Annual Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing Breakfast! This event will feature Tonika Johnson (Photographer and Activist) as the keynote speaker. Ms. Johnson will share information her multimedia project “Folded Map”, a visual investigation of community that illustrates the impact of Chicago’s residential segregation. If you are interested in sponsoring this event, please contact Liz Keegan at (616) 451-2980.

New Occupancy Guidebook!
The FHCWM is pleased to offer a complementary guidebook and a Square Footage Calculator Tool to assist in determining reasonable occupancy limits based on local restrictions. These resources assist condominium associations, landlords, property owners and managers, and municipalities enforcing occupancy codes in determining how to set occupancy limitations with consideration of fair housing laws. Visit our website at www.fhcwm.org/occupancy to download these materials.

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.

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.