



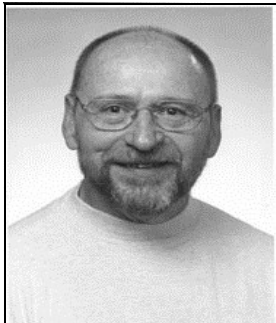
# FAIR HOUSING NEWS

Produced by the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

## Dr. Dennis Preston to Speak in Holland

On Thursday, October 10, 2013, Dr. Dennis Preston, a national expert on linguistic profiling, will provide the keynote address at the *7th Annual Lakeshore Fair Housing Breakfast* at the Midtown Center in Holland.

Dr. Preston, a Regents Professor at Oklahoma State University, is nationally known for his work regarding the science behind linguistic profiling. His research has



provided the foundation for several national testing projects. He will discuss the credibility of said testing, refuting criticisms that

such testing is inherently racist and/or unreliable. He will also discuss the results of several of the nationally known testing projects he has worked on that have used this type of testing.

The FHCWM has had the privilege of having Dr. Preston speak at past events and looks forward to sharing his important work with the Lakeshore. Thanks to our sponsors, there is no cost to attend the breakfast, which runs from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. Please pre-register for this free event online: [www.fhcwm.org/lksbreakfast](http://www.fhcwm.org/lksbreakfast).

## Congratulations, Cliff Schrupp!

### FHCWM Congratulates and Thanks Mentor Cliff Schrupp from FHC Metro Detroit Upon His Retirement

The first Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit, Cliff Schrupp, has retired. Mr. Schrupp has held the position of FHCMD's Executive Director since its inception in 1977. He played a very important role in advising the community members who organized the Fair Housing Center of Greater Grand Rapids (now the FHCWM) in 1980 as well as similar organizations in Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo, Jackson, Lansing, Muskegon and Saginaw. He developed a resource guide in 1987 for the formation and development of new fair housing groups that is still in use today. Mr. Schrupp has provided countless training, materials and guidance to all of the FHCWM staff over the years, for which we are truly grateful. He and the FHCMD have also partnered with us on significant fair



*Cliff Schrupp speaking in a joint FHCMD/FHCWM Fair Housing Litigation Orientation in 1992.*

housing projects such as state-wide Analyses of Impediments to Fair Housing; Legal Orientations for attorneys; and collaborative HUD grants to provide fair housing services across the state of Michigan.

In his time with the FHCMD, Mr. Schrupp supervised the investigation of more than six thousand complaints of unlawful housing discrimination. More than 400 complaints resulted in civil litigation, resulting in plaintiffs receiving more than \$11 million in settlements and awards. Prior to leading the FHCMD, Mr. Schrupp served as the Director of the Northwest InterFaith Center for Racial Justice; his work there resulted in positive changes in employment policies of all of the Detroit area television stations.

Mr. Schrupp worked as many as 70 hours a week at FHCMD for nearly 40 years, addressing housing discrimination and ensuring equal housing opportunity for many. Thank you, Mr. Cliff Schrupp!!!

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# ...FHCWM Notes & News...

## Fair Housing Tester Q & A

**Q: "Sure, I believe fair housing is important. But what can I do about it?"**

**A:** Plenty. Become a tester for the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan. You can make a real difference.

**Q: "What is the Fair Housing Center?"**

**A:** The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan is a private, non-profit organization that furthers equal housing opportunity through educational and enforcement-orientated programs based on Title VIII of the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1968, commonly referred to as the Fair Housing Act.

**Q: "What is a tester?"**

**A:** A tester is someone who believes in equal housing opportunity and volunteers to help fight unlawful housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, family status, marital status, gender, age or disability.

As a tester, you play the role of a home seeker who is looking for general information about a property. Testers inquire about availability, rental rates, what utilities are included, deposit amounts, and the application process. Testers must be objective, careful observers, accurate reporters and truthful witnesses. Testers are usually paid a small stipend for each test.

The Fair Housing Center needs testers representing all members of our community, including people of all adult ages, of diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, males and females, people with and without children, and persons with disabilities. Some view testing as a long-term volunteer commitment, while others may test only once or twice a year.

**Q: "What is testing?"**

**A:** Testing is the process of checking the housing market to measure and detect discriminatory treatment against home seekers. Two or more persons, similar in every respect other than the variable

being tested, are sent separately to the same sales or rental office. Testers keep careful notes on what they are told and how they are treated. They record their experience on a standard report form. Differences in the treatment of testers often form the basis for successful resolution of a housing discrimination complaint.

**Q: "Why testing?"**

**A:** The testing process has been consistently supported by federal courts as legitimate, necessary, and often the only method available to identify unlawful housing discrimination. In West Michigan, many successful cases and settlements have been based on evidence obtained by Fair Housing Center testers.

**Q: "Yes! I want to become a tester. What do I do?"**

**A:** Call Gabe Chapla at (616) 451-2980 or visit our website at [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org) to register for our next scheduled tester training session.

You can make a difference!

## National Fair Housing News

On June 6, 2013, the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan joined the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA) and twelve of its member organizations around the country to announce a partnership with Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. that will provide funds to foster homeownership, assist with rebuilding and stabilizing neighborhoods of color injured by the foreclosure crisis, and promote diverse, inclusive communities.

Some of the cities that were also included in this investigation were Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Baton Rouge, LA; Charleston, SC; Metropolitan Chicago, IL; Richmond, CA; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; Dayton, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Miami, FL; Milwaukee, WI; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Toledo, OH and Washington, DC.

This partnership is the result of a conciliation agreement signed by the parties settling a federal fair housing complaint filed in April 2012 with

*(Continued on next page)*

## FHCWM News:

### Thank You & Welcome!

Thank you **Lydia Van Raalte**, our former Education & Outreach Program Assistant. We truly appreciate her time, devotion and energy towards increasing awareness of fair housing and taking the FHCWM to new heights!

We would also like to congratulate and officially welcome our former Education intern **Megan Derks**, who is assuming the role of Program Assistant; she will be working on enforcement and advocacy as well as education programs.



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# ...FHCWM Notes & News...

(Continued)

the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The complaint alleged that Wells Fargo's bank-owned properties in primarily White areas were much better maintained and marketed by Wells Fargo than such properties in African-American and Latino neighborhoods.

This is the first-ever settlement regarding the equal maintenance and marketing of bank-owned homes, more commonly known as Real Estate Owned, or REO, homes. REO properties are homes that have gone through foreclosure and are now owned by banks, investors, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Federal Housing Administration, or Veterans Affairs. With this agreement, Wells Fargo will make important reforms to its maintenance and marketing practices nationwide.

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan will receive \$1.42 million dollars for neighborhood stabilization programs and \$170,000 in agency damages of the \$42 million dollars provided for by the conciliation agreement between Wells Fargo and the private fair housing organizations, and approved by HUD.

The FHCWM looks forward to working with partners who have already recognized that the affected neighborhoods are ripe with opportunity for those with enough foresight to make that investment. This includes partners like the Grand Rapids Public Schools with their Transformation Plan, the Rapid with the plan for the Express Bus Line down Division, Grand Rapids Friends of Parks with their plans for investing in street trees and creating a "green corridor" and groups working on programs to enhance home ownership.

NFHA and members, including the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan, have two similar discrimination cases pending against US Bank and Bank of America, which were also filed in 2012.

## State Fair Housing News

ANN ARBOR – The Fair Housing Center (FHC) of Southeastern Michigan and Renaissance Community Homes, a provider of assisted living services, recently announced the settlement of a HUD complaint against Scio Farms Estates, part of Sun Community Homes, in Ann Arbor. Under terms of the settlement, Scio Farms Estates and Sun Community Homes will no longer require guardians of tenants with developmental disabilities to live on premises when co-signing a lease, will provide training to their staff, and will pay \$39,500 to Renaissance and FHC. Renaissance must also develop written policies for all staff interacting with potential or current residents regarding HUD suggested language on a "Payee Policy" and a "Policy Against Unlawful Scrutiny on the Basis of Disability."

The FHC received a complaint from Sandy Donner, on behalf of Renaissance and two of its clients. She claimed that her clients were denied housing at Scio Farms Estates because of developmental disabilities. Ms. Donner submitted applications to Renaissance on behalf of three clients, signed by their guardians. The home was perfect for the clients- a great location, less expensive than their current rent, and more square footage.

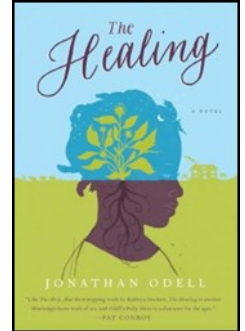
When Ms. Donner followed up, an agent told her that the corporate office denied the applications because the clients' guardians had signed the lease and "whoever signs the lease, has to live there." The FHC then advised the Renaissance staff to have the clients (one of whom was his own guardian; the other two had family members as guardians) sign the leases themselves, which they did. Because the clients have developmental disabilities, they rely on representative payees (someone who manages their money) who also co-signed the leases.

Sun Community Homes denied the applications a second time, stating that the payees would have to live with the clients because they signed the leases (the payees in this instance were an organization - Renaissance). FHC testing found that the policy "whoever signs the lease, has to live there" was not enforced for applicants without disabilities.

## Spotlight:

### Fair Housing Book Club

The FHCWM Book Club selects a book that includes themes or topics that touch on housing, discrimination, and/or diversity for staff, volunteers, and community members to read and discuss. The topics discussed vary widely and include historical events, civil rights, personal experiences and feelings, as well as how these books affect the readers. Participants come to understand how losing equal housing choice affects a person's entire quality of life and limits access to not only the home and neighborhood of their choice but also to education, transportation, healthcare, and job opportunities, among other amenities.



The meetings have created opportunities for staff to further connect and spread awareness of fair housing. In addition, the Book Club has resulted in partnerships with various authors, including Carlotta Walls LaNier, Brian Copeland, Heidi Darrow, Steve Luxenberg and **Jonathan Odell**. Mr. Odell, author of **The Healing**, joined the Grand Rapids Book Club via Skype for a in-depth and personal discussion of his book in January. **The Healing** is historical fiction that tells the story of a young slave who undertakes a quest to recover her identity and finds she must begin by seeking the answers to two questions: Who are my people and what are their stories? Mr. Odell shared his experiences with segregation as a child in the South and how his own family's stories and secrets shaped this incredible novel. We are grateful for the time he spent with us and look forward to reading all of his books!

These books and authors stimulate discussions that are both powerful and poignant. Please consider bringing a lunch and a friend to join us! See our website for the upcoming selections, dates, times and locations!

# Save the Dates! Upcoming Fair Housing Events

## **Lakeshore Friends of Fair Housing: Save the Date!**

The Fair Housing Center of West Michigan and the Lakeshore Advisory Board present the 7th Annual Lakeshore Fair Housing Breakfast, featuring a keynote presentation by Dr. Dennis Preston, Regents Professor at Oklahoma State University. He will be talking about linguistic profiling and how profiling may be used in the denial of fair and legal treatment by housing providers. The Lakeshore Breakfast will be taking place **Thursday, October 10, 2013** from 8:30AM-10AM in **Holland**. See Front Page article for more details!

### **Fair Housing Book Club**

Upcoming discussions will feature Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich and Autobiography of a Recovering Skinhead: The Frank Meeink Story as Told to Jody M. Roy, Ph.D. by Frank Meeink. Nickel and Dimed highlights how hard it is to prosper (and find safe, affordable housing) on poverty-level wages. Autobiography of a Recovering Skinhead details Frank Meeink's lack of opportunities in his violent home and neighborhood that made him easy pickings for skinhead gang recruiters.

### **Fair Housing Trainings**

The FHCWM 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 designed to last 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. **Check our website home page for upcoming dates: [www.fhcwm.org](http://www.fhcwm.org).**

The FHCWM hosts regular **tester trainings**. Testers are volunteers that play the role of a homeseeker and receive a stipend in return for their time and volunteer service. 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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