



FAIR HOUSING OF MARIN

"To ensure equal housing opportunity and to educate the community on the value of diversity in our neighborhoods through counseling, investigation, educational programs and preventive trainings."

"Para proteger la igualdad en las oportunidades de vivienda y educar a la comunidad acerca de la importancia de los vecindarios integrados, por medio de consejería, investigación, programas educativos y entrenamientos de prevención."

Summer 2003

RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY RACE AUDIT FINDS 60% DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT

In a landmark survey, Fair Housing of Marin found racial discrimination 60% of the time when applicants of color sought assisted residential care in Sonoma and Marin County facilities.

The first such audit done in the United States points out the serious problem confronting a quickly aging post-65-year old population destined in the San Francisco Bay Area to double from 12% to 20% in less than two decades.

The discrimination, while never blatant name calling or flat "we don't serve your kind" statements, nevertheless involved differential pricing, steering to other out-of-town or out-of-county facilities, incomplete information given to applicants of color, lack of follow-up, dissimilar answers as to special dietary needs questions, daily activities and events and whether rooms could be shared.

The audit included informational telephone surveys of 80 of 199 Residential Care Facilities in Marin and Sonoma counties, followed by 20 paired onsite tests. Site visits were conducted at 15 locations in 9 locales representing approximately 1,300 beds.

Discrimination in residential care facilities because of race is illegal in our state and in our nation. Fair Housing of Marin and the Marin County Board of Supervisors Task Force on Housing Discrimination will convene a meeting of Senior Advocates in Marin and Sonoma County to discuss the results of the meeting. ■

NATIONAL ORIGIN DISCRIMINATION CASE SETTLES FOR \$70,000

As a Caucasian male, "John" (not his real name) never expected to be a victim of discrimination, but that's exactly what occurred. What happened to John shows how discrimination hurts all of us. In 1999, John contacted our office because he had been unable to sell his mobile home at the Golden Gate Trailer Park in Larkspur.

(cont'd on page 3)



FAIR HOUSING SPECIAL EVENT

A CELEBRATION OF DIVERSITY

You are cordially invited to our annual Special Event to be held on September 25 at 5:30 pm at the lovely Hotel Acqua in Mill Valley. Join us as we celebrate diversity and the spirit of Fair Housing and as we present Fair Housing Leadership Awards to: Annette Rose, President, Marin County Board of Supervisors; Pillsbury Winthrop LLP and Reuben Burke, Fair Housing volunteer.

You will enjoy delicious food, wine tasting, fabulous live and silent auctions and a raffle. Live music will be provided by the Refreshments Band and Noah Griffin, a cabaret singer and FHOM Board member. Admission is \$30 per ticket (\$35 at the door) which includes 2 raffle tickets. Please call us at (415) 457-5025 to RSVP. We look forward to seeing you there!

This event is possible because of the support of our two major sponsors: The Mechanics Bank and the Bank of Marin. Thanks to the many Marin and Sonoma merchants who have donated prizes and to our Event Committee: Greg DiPaolo, (Committee Chair), Wini Ragus, Melissa Prandi, Larry Miller, Kristi Standford, and Fair Housing of Marin staff. ■

PUTTING A FACE ON CHILD DISCRIMINATION

Right on the heels of our recent audit revealing that families in Marin face significant discrimination in housing, one such family recently settled a case against a property owner accused of discriminating against families with children at a local apartment complex. The alleged discrimination was not a failure to rent, but overly restrictive rules and regulations.

The family filed suit to challenge policies that unduly restricted children's access to the playground and common areas of the complex. These policies kept the playground closed virtually all the time except when children were at school, barred children over the age of 10 from using the playground at any time, and prohibited the use of any wheeled toys. The rules meant that children had little opportunity for outside play in the immediate vicinity of their homes, an atmosphere that caused many families with children to move out or not want to move in. In settling the case, the housing provider agreed to change the stringent rules. The playground is now open every day until 6:00 p.m. for the use of children 12 and under, and has tables and chairs so that adults can comfortably supervise their preschoolers. Furthermore, the complex now permits children to use wagons, tricycles, toy cars, and other small, wheeled toys on the premises. The housing provider staff will receive training in fair housing laws provided by Fair Housing of Marin.

As part of the settlement, the housing provider paid the family \$70,000. The "family unfriendly" environment at the apartment complex had made this family so unwelcome that they moved to another complex. To their credit, they continued to pursue the case in order to improve the situation at the complex for families living there now and in the future. ■

WHAT'S THAT WHITE THING THAT JUST FELL OUT OF THE NEWSLETTER?

JUST in case you didn't notice, a contribution envelope is enclosed with this newsletter. We'd rather have you use it than recycle it! Two anonymous "hate" letters one published in this newsletter and the other a diatribe against "worthless Latinos moving into Marin to get on welfare", say louder than we can why Fair Housing of Marin needs to be here for those who need us. Each one of us embodies the spirit of fair housing that people learn to live together by living together. Individual donations are crucial to our budget, especially in these tough economic times. Consider using the envelope to make a contribution to our work. Come to our fundraiser in September and give while having fun. You can now give to Fair Housing on-line! Go to www.justgive.org and type in Fair Housing of Marin in the box that allows you to search by agency name. It is easy, self-explanatory and painless! ■

HATE MAIL • HATE MAIL

The following letter was received by FHOM after our Fall newsletter issue. It is reproduced exactly as it was written. Our response to this landlord follows.

Dear Sir:

"I completely disagree with you, As a landlord, I enforce NO CHILDREN Policy. I have Adult ONLY - prefer Senior Citizens. Also, no pets. You have no right telling me I must have my units destroyed by little Brats. It's my property, I OWN it. I can and will rent to those whom I approve. And you will like it. I let renters KNOW - AHEAD - of my Policy. No surprises. No young people either. Seniors want Peace and quiet. No chance of couples producing kids. You want kids? You take care of them."

Homeowner and Apartment Mgr.

Dear Landlord:

As you were not willing to give your name, we assume that you are aware that you are violating federal and state laws with your rental policies. Congress and the state legislature passed laws many years ago, making it illegal to discriminate against families with children because so many were being denied access to housing such as yours.

Fair Housing of Marin's primary role is to educate the community on discrimination issues. We also take in complaints of discrimination and assist complainants with their options: mediation, filing an administrative complaint with HUD, or a lawsuit.

While it may be true that it is your property, once you begin to use the property as a business enterprise, you are subject to a variety of laws, including fair housing laws. Despite the fact that you clearly do not like children (or even adults who might produce children), the law prohibits denying access to families with children. You may or may not be aware that your policies are also discriminatory on the basis of age under state law. As for the fact that seniors want peace and quiet, there are senior complexes specifically designated for seniors to meet their needs.

We sincerely hope that you will change your policy before we receive a complaint or test your property in a random audit. Not only are you denying many potentially excellent tenants - families with children and other child-bearing adults - access to housing, you are leaving yourself open to a lawsuit that could be costly. If you have any questions about what the federal and state laws require of you, please feel free to call us - even anonymously. ■

EDUCATION NEWS



We want to congratulate the young artists who received prizes in our annual Fair Housing Poster Contest:

Michael Cavanagh (8th. grade), **Sandrena Frischer** (6th. grade), **Milton Gallo** (3rd. grade), **Sebastian Gallegos** (3rd. grade), **April Flores Gama** (3rd. grade), **Victor Gutierrez** (7th. Grade), **Cornelius Hoover** (6th. grade), **Kali N. Jones** (3rd. grade), **Ashley Montgomery** (6th. grade), **Michael Zanides** (3rd. grade).

Staff Prize:

Rosa Guzman (5th. grade), **Josephina Pillado** (3rd. grade), **Kiara Polk** (Grade: K).

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR POSTER CONTEST WINNERS!

Our 2003 Fair Housing Poster Contest Awards Ceremony for contest winners was held during a special meeting before the Marin County Board of Supervisors. This year's theme was: "The World: A Rainbow of Friends."

We want to thank the following individuals for their participation:

Judges: Carole Hayashino, Associate Vice-President, San Francisco State University, Richard Marantonio, Director of Litigation, Legal Aid of the North Bay, and Ricardo Moncrief, Chair of ISOJI.

Mistress of Ceremoioies: Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools.

Presenters: Dave Fahrner, President, Marin Association of Realtors, Pearlene Leary, Marin County Human Rights Commission, Dr. Lois Moore, Trustee, Marin Community Foundation, Tom Wilson, Executive Director, Canal Community Alliance, Jane Shandler, Training Director, Fair Housing of Marin, Margie Goodman, District Coordinator to Senator John Burton and Reid Thaler as GUMBY.

Reading Fair Housing month proclamations were: Annette Rose, President, Marin County Board of Supervisors, and Chris Raker, Mayor, City of Mill Valley. Susan Sheffel, District Administrator for DFEH presented Fair Housing of Marin with a Fair Housing month proclamation.

The winners received their prizes and certificates of recognition from the offices of Senator John Burton and Assemblyman Joe Nation. This project was funded by Frank Howard Allen and the Marin Community Foundation. Prizes were donated by The Marin Association of Realtors with donations from The Art Center II in San Anselmo. ■

TENANT INFORMATION BOOKLET NOW AVAILABLE



We are proud to announce the publication of our new Tenant Information Booklet, a 40-page handbook that contains valuable information to help tenants with their housing search and during their tenancy. The booklet is available in English and in Spanish and is free of charge.

The project is funded by the Supervisor's Task Force on Housing Discrimination and the Marin Community Foundation. Call our office at (415) 457-5025 to order copies. ■

National origin discrimination case settles for \$70,000

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What John did not anticipate was that the owner and on site manager of the trailer park would thwart his efforts to sell his trailer home by refusing to approve the Latinos who applied to purchase the mobile home and take over the rental of his space. According to John, the on site manager of the trailer park, who has since been fired, bragged about keeping "Mexicans" out of the park and boasted that he imposed onerous conditions on Latino applicants to exclude them. The manager later told Fair Housing that he barred Latinos at the direction of the owners, who made disparaging remarks about "Mexicans" and employed the tactic of a fictitious "waiting list" to ensure that Latinos could not move in. The owners' and manager's refusal to accept Latino residents ultimately prevented John from selling his trailer. A key piece of evidence was that although other similarly situated trailer parks had numerous Latino residents, Golden Gate had none.

Prior to trial, Golden Gate's owners settled the case for \$70,000. We applaud John's courage in pursuing this case. Given the terms of the settlement agreement, we look forward to seeing many Latino residents at Golden Gate Trailer Park in the future. ■

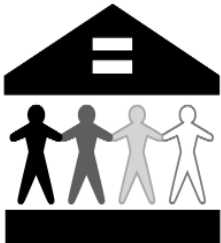
OPEN DOORS

Editor: Adriana Ames.

Contributors: Nancy Kenyon, Cathy Rose-Perry, Caroline Peattie, Jane Shandler and Atashi Chakravarty.

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FAIR HOUSING OF MARIN 615 B Street, San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 457-5025 • Fax (415) 457-6382
Email: fhom@fairhousingmarin.com • Website: www.fairhousingmarin.com

BOARD AND STAFF NEWS

Welcome to new Board members Ken Gosliner and Jim Current. Ken, who lives in San Rafael, is a retired businessman with longtime involvement in the community, including Board memberships on Homeward Bound, Marin Nexus, and as Board President of the Marin City Childrens' Program.


Jim Current, another activist, is the former Minister of the United Methodist Church in Novato. His activities include the Marin Interfaith Council, the Buck Institute for Aging, Chaplaincies for Marin General and Novato Community Hospitals, the Marin Institute for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Problems, Novato Human Needs and Bolivian Handcrafts.

In April, Ruth Sandford, our Financial Wizard, retired to "smell the roses" and enjoy her granddaughter, Kali. Angela Robinson, an independent bookkeeper from Petaluma, has replaced Ruth. A warm welcome, Angela. ■

SUPERVISORS TASK FORCE NEWS

The Board of Supervisors Task Force on Housing Discrimination, headed by Susan Adams with alternate Annette Rose, is working hand in glove with our organization with great achievement. The Task Force was able to launch a new Rentwatch column in the Marin IJ that features renter, owner and fair housing information for readers. The column will appear monthly in the Home & Garden section - watch for it!

The Task Force also funded our new Tenant Information booklet and worked to lower the rate of child discrimination shown by our recent child audit. They are contacting city governments and urging local action. Finally, members of the Task Force are helping individuals to eliminate Restrictive Covenants from deeds. On July 31, the Task Force cosponsored a Public Meeting and Press Conference on racial discrimination in Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly in Marin and Sonoma. Future actions are in the works. ■



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Katherine J. Higgins
Investment Broker
591 Redwood Hwy., Suite 1100
Mill Valley, California 94941
Office: (415) 381-7385
Mobile: (415) 302-7730
Fax: (415) 381-7355
E-Mail: katherine@khiggins.com
Website: www.khiggins.com

McLAUGHLIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Pamela McLaughlin

Phone: 415/924-0321 47-E Tamal Vista
Fax: 415/924-6812 Corte Madera, CA 94925



Melissa Prandi, MPM
President
1321 Third Street
San Rafael, CA 94901
Phone (415) 482.9988 ext. 203
Direct (415) 482.9977 ext. 203
Fax (415) 482.6633
prandiprop@aol.com
www.prandiprop.com

Residential Property Specialists



TMW ELECTRIC
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Tom Woods
75 Briarwood Drive
San Rafael, CA 94901-1406
Phone: (415) 454-9588
FAX: (415) 457-8930



Serving the Communities North of the Golden Gate

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Jennifer & Tom Loucks
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1604 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., San Anselmo, Ca 94960
18 Park St., Woodacre, Ca 94973

DeMARTINI & WALKER
(415) 472-7880

VINCENT J. DeMARTINI
Attorney at Law

175 N. Redwood Dr., Suite 250
San Rafael, CA 94903
Fax (415) 472-7950