



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.”

Winter 2003

Paying Tribute - Fair Housing Leadership Awards

Fair Housing of Marin was proud to present the 2003 Fair Housing Leadership Awards in our annual Fair Housing Special Event held last fall. This year, we honored: Supervisor Annette Rose, Pillsbury Winthrop, LLP and Volunteer Reuben Burke for their continued support to our mission. The awards were presented by: Supervisor Steve Kinsey; Chris Raker, Mayor of Mill Valley; Scott Chang, Fair Housing Attorney and Lilli Rollins, Vice-Principal, San Marin High School.

The event was made possible thanks to the financial support from The Mechanics Bank, Bank of Marin, California Land Title, and numerous donations from many Marin and Sonoma merchants. ■



Noah Griffen, Auctioneer



Annette Rose; Patrick Thompson & Ryan Takemoto (Pillsbury Winthrop)

A Successful Mediation

FHOM received a complaint from an African-American woman living in a Novato apartment complex with her 16 year old grandson. The woman contacted FHOM after receiving a Three Day Notice on the heels of what she described as harassment and discrimination based on familial status and/or race. She stated that apart from herself and her grandson, virtually all of the tenants in the large complex were Caucasian or Latino. The complainant alleged that her grandson was targeted for noise complaints because of his race and age, and that the neighbors and the management were intolerant of customary teenage behavior.

FHOM conducted a mediation at the site, giving each party the opportunity to present her perspective on the issues. The manager detailed the nature of the neighbors' complaints and the tenant expressed her concern that the complaints were motivated by racial prejudice and/or prejudice against teens. The parties then brainstormed ways to alleviate the neighbors' concerns while preserving the teen's rights. The mediation concluded with a list of steps that the tenant, her grandson, and the manager agreed to take to ensure a peaceful and harmonious environment for the tenants as well as compliance with the fair housing laws. The manager rescinded the Three Day Notice and the woman and her grandson were able to remain in their apartment. ■

Follow-up Activities to Residential Care Audit

Fair Housing of Marin has launched an educational campaign in response to the results of our groundbreaking audit that found racial discrimination at residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFE). We are working in collaboration with RCFE professionals and many local, regional and national groups serving seniors.

As part of this campaign, Fair Housing will conduct a half-day seminar on Fair Housing Laws for Residential Care Facility owners and administrative staff on Thursday, January 29, 2004 from 1-4 PM. The program, hosted by The Tamalpais, a life care senior community in Greenbrae, will feature presenters from the California Association on Nursing Home Reform and the American Association of Retired Persons. Funding from the Board of Supervisors Task Force on Housing Discrimination and the Marin Community Foundation allow the program to be offered free of charge. Seating is limited and reservations are required. Contact jane@fairhousingmarin.com. ■

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE - WWW.FAIRHOUSINGMARIN.COM



FHOM Board of Directors: (From left to right): Ken Gosliner, Kristi Sandford, Greg DiPaolo, Wini Ragus, Yvonne Bush, Larry Miller and Steve Saxe. Not in picture: Jim Current, Noah Griffin and Melissa Prandi.

Executive Director's Column Looking Back

At one of the holiest times of the year, I would like to pay tribute to the many people in the past whose work and beliefs set the stage for our organization to be here today.

Many folks may think that Fair Housing nonprofits were formed to enforce civil rights and fair housing laws. Not so! Virtually all Fair Housing nonprofits were created by coalitions of churches, synagogues, meeting houses and individuals in the 1950's before there were any laws. These folks felt that their all-white neighborhoods were not occurring naturally, and that their neighborhood would be richer if they had African-American families.

Some of the activities that the movement initiated were the development of a testing program, African-American Buyer Parties, full page ads in the local newspaper asking everyone in town to sign a non-discrimination pledge that was publicized, Art Shows featuring African-American performing and visual artists, and on occasion, picketing and publicizing proven discriminators. One of the big jobs was lobbying for a Federal Fair Housing law, a dream that came true in 1968.

Did you know that there is a national professional association of more than 100 Fair Housing nonprofits around the country? It has been my privilege to be on their Board of Directors and to hear how local Directors in Birmingham, Alabama, Detroit, Michigan, Austin, Texas and Miami, Florida are dealing with housing discrimination. Our mission is much larger now, with laws that protect families with children, persons with disabilities and discrimination based on age, gender, sexual orientation, source of income and any arbitrary reason.

Hats off to our fair housing forebears and to all of our current standard bearers, funders and donors. We love you! ■

Landlords Have Rights, Too! Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I refuse to rent a second floor unit to a family with children because of safety concerns?

A: No. You cannot steer families with children to a certain floor or part of a building. It is up to each perspective tenant to decide if the unit is appropriate to his or her situation. Regarding safety concerns, you are of course responsible to comply with city and county regulations concerning the maintenance and condition of the building. We suggest that you check your property for potential child hazards and correct any problems.

Q: Can I limit the number of people who live in a unit?

A: Yes. As long as your limit is not so restrictive that it discriminates against families with children. The state guideline is 2 people for bedroom plus one. That means that 5 people can live in a 2 bedroom unit.

Call us anytime. We will be happy to answer your questions. ■

Test Your Knowledge of Fair Housing Laws

Are you a tenant? How much do you know about fair housing laws and how they affect you? Answer the following questions True or False.

1. A building owner can charge all tenants with children an additional security deposit to cover any damage the children might do in the apartment as well as the outside property.
2. An apartment manager can recommend to an African-American tenant to apply in a neighborhood where he and his family might fit better.
3. A property manager may refuse to rent a 2-bedroom apartment to a married couple with a 6-year old son and a 9-year old daughter if opposite gender children over 6 years of age will share a bedroom.
4. A manager can refuse to rent to a qualified applicant with limited English on the basis that she will not be able to communicate with the tenant.
5. An owner may refuse to rent to an Asian applicant with a poor tenant history.
6. House rules may say "No children allowed in the laundry room."

(Answers on page 3)

EDUCATION NEWS

Storyteller Season 2003

We were pleased to once again present another season of our popular storytelling program, "The Colors of Diversity" with the return of Master Storyteller Kirk Waller. Last fall, we launched a new program for pre-schools thanks to a grant from the Marin County Children and Families Commission. We hosted 10 presentations for school audiences and 10 for pre-schools. The school program was funded through a joint grant from Autodesk and Pacific Union. The presentations feature thought provoking and fun stories about human rights and equality. We will offer this program in 2004. ■

Upcoming Events & Programs

Fair Housing Poster Contest: We invite Marin County students in grades K-8 to submit entries for our annual Fair Housing Poster Contest. We will accept entries until the end of March 2004. The contest is part of Marin County's celebration of April as National Fair Housing month.

Panel of Americans: Celebrate Diversity with the Panel of Americans, a program that features a panel of Marin residents who share their personal stories on issues of stereotypes and prejudice. Available to schools, community based agencies or any other group. Call us if you are interested in hosting a panel or if you want to volunteer to be a panelist.

Fair Housing Rights Clinics: We will conduct two clinics for tenants this spring in collaboration with Marin Head Start and the Novato Human Needs Center. The participants will learn about their fair housing rights and other housing services available in Marin.

Fair Housing Presentations: We offer Fair Housing education to agencies and organizations throughout Marin County. We can conduct in house information sessions of varying lengths for your group.

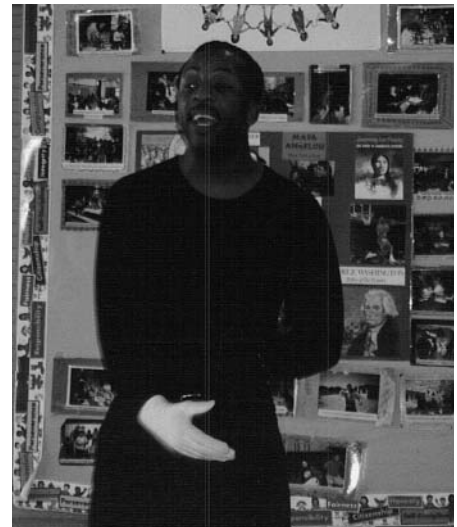
Fair Housing Training Seminars: A half day training for property owners, managers and housing providers. Please call Jane Shandler at (415) 457-5025 to find out the date and location of the next upcoming seminar or to schedule a new one. ■

For more information about any of these programs, please contact Adriana Ames: (415) 457-2390 or aames@fairhousingmarin.com

Announcing Our New Website

We are proud to announce the launching of our new website at www.fairhousingmarin.com. The website contains information about fair housing laws, our fair housing training seminars and a calendar of educational activities with links to fair housing and community organizations.

The website was designed by a team of technology and marketing professional under a grant from the Taproot Foundation. The site enables us to provide wider fair housing services to our community.



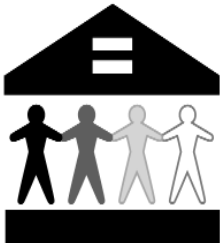
Kirk Waller, Storyteller

Answers to Fair Housing Quiz

(cont'd from page 2)

1. False. An additional security deposit for children cannot be required. Regardless of a family's composition, a security deposit can be no more than twice the monthly rent for an unfurnished unit and three times the monthly rent for a furnished unit.
2. False. Steering people to a particular neighborhood or areas of a complex because they are African-American or foreign born violates the law.
3. False. There is no requirement that opposite gender children have separate bedrooms. This is a form of discrimination based on gender as well as family status and violates Federal and State fair housing laws.
4. False. Applicants with limited English cannot be denied housing. This would be national origin discrimination and is illegal under both federal and state fair housing laws. A manager can use the services of a translator to communicate with the tenant.
5. True. Any applicant with a poor tenant history can be refused.
6. False. Owners and managers cannot require different house rules for families with children or restrict children's access to common areas, except where health codes apply. A more neutral rule would prohibit vandalism, or loitering in the laundry room.

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Board And Staff News

Welcome to our newest Board member Kristi Sandford, whom we found through her Mom, Ruth, our former Accountant. Kristi heads her own Interior Design firm, Kristi Sandford Interiors; one of her rooms was recently featured in San Francisco Magazine. Kristi also does volunteer work for Marin Ballet, Project Open Hand, Marin Waldorf School and Ritter House in San Rafael.

A fond farewell to Greg DiPaolo, our Board Treasurer. Greg joined the Board in January 2001 after retiring as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of South Jersey Savings & Loan Association. Greg has worked wonders with our financial reports and kept our budget in hand, always with a genial, warm manner. We will miss him. ■

OPEN DOORS

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Graphic Design: Contact Graphic Design, San Rafael, CA

Investigators Wanted

FHOM is currently looking for individuals from diverse backgrounds to perform investigations of real estate agents and rental properties on an on call basis. Testers are paid a stipend of \$40 plus expenses incurred, such as mileage and bridge tolls. The following are Tester Training Dates for 2004: March 30, June 29, September 28.

To learn more about becoming a tester, please contact Carlos Cardona at (415) 457-5025 or carlos@fairhousingmarin.com ■

Happy Martin Luther King Day!

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" - Martin Luther King Jr.

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