



FAIR HOUSING OF MARIN

Opening Doors to Equality and Diversity

"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."

Spring 2007

NATIONAL FAIR HOUSING MONTH CELEBRATION

Thursday, April 5, 2007

Theme: Open Hearts - Open Neighborhoods



In celebration of National Fair Housing Month, Fair Housing of Marin presents its annual Fair Housing Poster Contest Award Ceremony to honor the 2007 contest winners.

- Time and Place: Thursday, April 5th, 11:00 AM, Marin County Civic Center, Suite 330, in San Rafael.
- Presenters: MC: Mary Jane Burke, Marin County Superintendent of Schools; Supervisor Steve Kinsey, President of the Marin County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Judy Arnold, Chair of the Task Force on Housing Discrimination; Wayne Cooper, Mayor of San Anselmo.
- Funders: Frank Howard Allen Realtors, The Marin Association of Realtors, Prandi Property Management, California Land Title of Marin, Marin 1 Real Estate and Investment Services, Old Republic Title Company, and Doodlebug. ■

FHOM RECEIVES HUD GRANT

Fair Housing of Marin was awarded a nationally competitive HUD grant to carry out programs to prevent discriminatory housing practices in Marin, Sonoma, and Contra Costa counties. ■

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER..... BY LIVING TOGETHER

Imagine - or remember - the excitement of buying your first home. But imagine - or remember - that you are somehow "different" from the other residents in your new neighborhood, and that these differences cause clashes that threaten to sap the joy of home ownership. This was the situation faced recently by "Mr. X," leading him to seek help from Fair Housing of Marin.

Mr. X is a U.S. citizen from Central America. He and his wife, who is also from Central America, worked hard, saved their money, and recently were finally able to buy a nice home for themselves and their children in an unincorporated part of Marin. Apart from Mr. X and his family, most of the residents in this neighborhood are Caucasian. Shortly after moving in, Mr. X sought help from Fair Housing of Marin to end what he perceived as harassment. He reported that the neighbors scrutinized his every move, photographed activity in and around his house, berated his guests and him for parking on the public street in front of their homes, and summoned the police to his home with false allegations of drug activity.

FHOM reached out to community representatives and learned that the neighbors were worried that property values might decline due to dense occupancy and deterioration of neighborhood standards. FHOM helped to establish channels of communication to help the neighbors and Mr. X understand and appreciate each other's concerns and feelings. The issues included parking, number of occupants and visitors, construction, and threats to call the INS. FHOM's intervention helped foster a climate in which the neighbors were able to learn from each other about their shared concerns and differing expectations. It is such shared communication that can lead to harmonious relationships among neighbors of diverse backgrounds, races, and cultures. ■

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN LOOKING BACK

In February, neighbors of a proposed four-home Habitat for Humanity affordable housing project in the Strawberry area expressed their opposition to the project, citing fear of falling property values and deterioration of the neighborhood. The issue became a hot topic in the Marin IJ, eliciting many Letters to the Editor. In response, the Board of Directors and Staff of Fair Housing voted unanimously to support the Habitat project.

As these arguments resonated with my fair housing history back East, I wrote a Letter to the Editor of the IJ in which I noted in part:

"Falling property values and fear of deteriorating neighborhoods were major arguments in the 1940s and 50s given by homeowners determined to keep African-Americans out of their neighborhood. Their actions stimulated other neighbors to take a strong stand for inclusion. This in turn led to fair housing groups springing up across the country. The groundswell of support for African-Americans in their heroic fight for equal housing rights culminated in 1968 in the passage of the first federal Fair Housing Act."

It has been rewarding to see the positive Letters to the Editor in response to neighbors' objections to the Habitat project. It is good to know that in this day and age, people are willing to speak up publicly for equality. We invite all Marin residents and fair housing supporters, including those near the proposed project, to do the same, as expressed by our 2007 Fair Housing Month theme: "Open Hearts, Open Neighborhoods". ■

SUPPORT FAIR HOUSING

How can you support our work? Let us count the ways ...

- By Mail, the traditional way with a check or credit card.
- On our Website with a credit card at www.fairhousingmarin.com.
- Through Corporate Matching Programs with a double-donation, one from you and one from your company.
- With Stock Donations, gifts of stocks or securities, which often confer significant tax benefits on donors. Please consult your tax advisor if you wish to make a transfer and FHOM's Executive Director for more information.
- With a donation of your used car or truck, done easily through our website.

All gifts are greatly appreciated by Fair Housing and are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. ■

OPEN DOORS

is published two times a year by Fair Housing of Marin to inform the community and contributors about activities and programs.

Editor: Adriana Ames

Thanks to Nancy Kenyon, Ana Del Bosque, Cathy Ross-Perry, Jane Shandler and Jean Coppock for their contributions.

Graphic Design: Contact Graphic Design - 510 220 0442

BRIEFLY

FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION TO LARRY BRACKETT

On January 23, 2007, the Board of Directors passed a Resolution acknowledging the strong support of Larry Brackett, President and CEO of Frank Howard Allen Realtors for his dedication to the furtherance of tolerance, understanding and equal housing opportunities for all in Marin County.

FORUM ON PREFERENCES

On March 8th, the Board of Supervisors Task Force on Housing Discrimination and the Marin Community Foundation sponsored a second Forum on Preferences. This educational Forum discussed the issue of preferences in the selection of tenants in affordable housing projects. Contact Nancy Kenyon at our office for information on the Forum.

OLD REPUBLIC TITLE COMBINES GREETINGS WITH GIVING

Old Republic Title Company of San Rafael creatively combined their holiday gifts to their clients with their commitment to give back to the community. In lieu of their traditional gift, they individualized a plaque for each client that stated that Old Republic had made a donation to FHOM in the client's name. Plaques were accompanied by a letter from Old Republic Title Vice President and Sales Manager, Fariba Zolnasr, describing Fair Housing's mission and work.

SAVE A TREE!

Sign up NOW for email newsletters at www.fairhousingmarin.com or contact James Zazueta at james@fairhousingmarin.com.

WATCH FOR RENT WATCH!

The Marin Independent Journal continued the publication of "Rent Watch," a monthly column on tenant and fair housing law featured the first Saturday of each month in the Home and Garden section.

SPANISH ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Look out for our Spanish TV ad campaign to be featured this summer on Univision, KDTV 14. ■

LANDLORD'S CORNER

Did you know these were effective Jan 1 2007?

- The 60-day termination of tenancy rule is reinstated for month-to-month tenants who have been in their rental for more than one year. A 30-day notice is still permitted for month-to-month tenancies of less than one year.
- Senate Bill 1609 ensures that reverse mortgage borrowers are protected and informed of the terms of the transaction by requiring HUD-approved counseling for ALL reverse mortgage transactions, requiring lenders to provide loan documents in the language negotiated and prohibiting the selling of an annuity as a condition of a reverse mortgage product. ■

SAVE THE DATE!

First Annual Old Republic Title Company
"Runway Marin" Benefit Fashion Show
Friday, November 9, 2007 - 11:30
Embassy Suites Hotel



Join us for a delightful afternoon luncheon of FUN & FASHION!! A fantastic opportunity to view beautiful spring fashions from famous designers. All proceeds from this year's event will benefit Fair Housing of Marin. Let us know if you would like to become a sponsor, volunteer your time, donate your boutique

fashions or prizes or just want to help. For more details, visit www.runwaymarin.com. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

FAIR HOUSING TRAINING SEMINAR

Our popular Fair Housing Law and Practice, a 3-hour seminar for housing industry professionals, will be offered on April 23, 1:00 - 4:00 PM at the San Rafael Corporate Center, San Rafael. The program is accredited by the CA Department of Real Estate for 4 hours of continuing education units. Pre-registration is required. Contact Jane Shandler at jane@fairhousingmarin.com.

TESTER TRAINING

A Workshop for individuals of diverse backgrounds who want to become on call fair housing investigators. Our next training will be held on April 19, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. For more information contact Ana Del Bosque at ana@fairhousingmarin.com.

FAIR HOUSING OUTREACH FOR AGENCIES

Call us for our on site presentations on fair housing law and discriminatory practices for your agency staff and clients. For more information, contact Michele Hurtado at michele@fairhousingmarin.com. ■

BILINGUAL STORYTELLER



Claudia Cuentas

Fair Housing of Marin is proud to present Claudia Cuentas, our new Latina Storyteller who will be delighting our young audiences and carrying out the powerful message of our popular program, "The Colors of Diversity" in English and Spanish. Claudia is a talented musician and an accomplished artist. She has worked for several years as a professional storyteller, teacher and mentor in the Bay Area and in Lima, Peru, where she was born. ■

FHOM MONITORS CRAIGSLIST

In an era where an ever-increasing number of people rely on the internet as a major source of advertisement, FHOM has begun monitoring housing rental advertisements on Craigslist in Marin County. Most commonly, FHOM finds discriminatory advertising barring families with children or couples. FHOM sends a letter pointing out the fair housing issue(s) and encouraging the advertiser to change the wording and call our agency with questions. Most responses are positive and people seek our advice on how to word subsequent advertisements. ■

BOARD AND STAFF NEWS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

- Sanjida Mazid lives in Novato and is a Project Manager for the Solano County Health & Social Services. Sanjida also mentors at the Marin Education Fund.
- Debbie McGillis, a Greenbrae resident, is a property manager and consultant. Debbie is a PR natural and is the new Chair of our Public Relations Committee.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

- James Zazueta, our new Office Manager, lives in Oakland with his wife, Donna, and his two children, Emma, 5 and Selena, 1. James likes working out at his gym and power walking around Lake Merritt.
- Michele Hurtado, Education Coordinator, is a local San Rafaelite. Michele works part-time for AlmaVia of San Rafael. She enjoys her dogs, writing, singing and being the aunt to her nephew's 2 1/2 year old twins, Mason & Malia.
- Wendy Matlow, our new bookkeeper, lives in Petaluma. Her other accounts include the Marin Symphony and CUREE. In her spare time, Wendy likes to compete in the sport of agility with her dogs. She says it's very addicting! ■

LITERATURE AVAILABLE

Call our office for copies of the following fair housing material, many in multiple languages:

- Tenant Booklet
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Residential Care Facilities
- Lending Discrimination
- Predatory Lending
- Fair Housing for Housing Providers
- Fair Housing for Families with Children
- Agency Brochure
- Audit Reports



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**“Lo siento,
 debí haber
 perdido sus
 documentos...”**



Es raro que un prestador pierda formas de trabajo (W-2) o verificaciones de ingresos. No se deje engañar por esas excusas. Lo que aparenta ser un retraso podría ser discriminación. No se deje. Usted puede hacer algo.

Si sospecha de prácticas injustas al buscar vivienda, llame a HUD o a su centro local para la vivienda justa. Todos merecemos la misma oportunidad.



Igualdad de Oportunidad en la Vivienda

VIVIENDA JUSTA ES LA LEY

Departamento de Vivienda y Desarrollo Urbano de los EE.UU. • 1-800-669-9777 • TDD 1-800-927-9275

**“I’m sorry.
 I must have
 misplaced
 your
 paperwork...”**



Lenders don't often lose W-2 forms or income verifications. Don't be fooled by excuses. What appears to be a delay could be discrimination. You can fight back.

If you suspect unfair lending practices, contact HUD or your local Fair Housing Center. Everyone deserves a fair chance.




EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

FAIR HOUSING IS THE LAW!

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 1-800-669-9777 • TDD 1-800-927-9275

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