

Local Builder's Negligence is Responsible for Unsafe and Inaccessible Living Conditions Affecting Seniors and Residents with Disabilities

On May 15, a news conference was held to announce a joint lawsuit filed by The Fair Housing Center, The Ability Center, and Brooklynn Park resident Jenny Tillman alleging that Brooklynn Park Villas, a 55+ housing community in Toledo, Ohio, was falsely marketed as accessible but exhibits glaring violations of The Fair Housing Act. The lawsuit accuses Moline Builders, Inc., JLJ Development, Inc., Larry L. Fast, and James Moline of discriminating against persons with disabilities by failing to comply with federal design and construction regulations for accessible housing. With negligence and reckless indifference, the property's builders continued to violate the law even after being fully informed of their lack of compliance.

"Having lived with MS for 25 years, I bought my home thinking about my future. After moving in and living in my home, it became clear it was not accessible to me or others in this community," stated Ms. Tillman, Brooklynn Park resident. "The step at my front door can be difficult for me, so often I can't even use my main entrance and have to enter the house through the garage. I asked the builder many times to make changes to make it accessible but I was told, 'You bought it this way.' I intended for this home to be my last home for this last chapter of my life, but instead I was taken advantage of."

"Nearly half of fair housing cases are based on disability discrimination and we have a large aging population," stated Michael Marsh, President and CEO of The Fair Housing Center. "Accessible housing is vital to create a diverse and inclusive community where people with disabilities feel welcome and have the opportunity to thrive."



Jenny Tillman, Brooklynn Park Resident



Many homes contain steps leading into the front entrance.

During an extensive investigation at Brooklynn Park, The Fair Housing Center and The Ability Center discovered numerous violations of accessibility requirements, both in individual units and in common use areas. For example, many entrances contain steps; walkways are impassable due to steep slopes or lack of curb cuts; environmental controls, mailboxes, and other amenities are located out of reach; and kitchens and bathrooms do not provide sufficient clear floor space to be usable by persons with disabilities.

"When developers fail to comply with the minimal access standards set by federal law, people with disabilities are often forced to choose between unsafe, inaccessible housing and segregated, institutional settings," stated Katherine Hunt Thomas, Attorney for The Ability Center.

The Fair Housing Center's attempts to establish a cooperative relationship with Moline Builders were dismissed. During a meeting in June 2016, Moline Builders was made explicitly aware of the ways Brooklynn Park did not comply with fair housing regulations, and The Fair Housing Center provided suggestions for modifications that would bring the properties into compliance. Despite having full knowledge of the violations, Moline Builders proceeded to build additional units at Brooklynn Park that exhibited the same accessibility obstacles. "If we don't hold them accountable, it gives a green light for other builders to ignore the law," Michael Marsh asserted.

The lawsuit demands that Moline Builders and JLJ Development retrofit all their properties to make them accessible and seeks damages to compensate victims for their losses and deter future discriminatory conduct.



YOUR ZIP CODE MATTERS. IT'S NOT JUST AN ADDRESS, IT'S AN IDENTITY.

The third annual Ode to the Zip Code poetry contest wrapped up on 419 Day with a live reading at the Main Library. Judges narrowed the pool of 250 entries received, and the finalists were invited to read their poems and compete for cash prizes. A new youth category added this year gave special recognition to the voices of our younger generation.

The contest is a partnership of The Fair Housing Center, the Arts Commission, Toledo Lucas County Public Library, and Toledo City Paper. Participants are asked to submit short poems inspired by their ZIP Code, where the number of words in each line of the poem is determined by the corresponding digit in their ZIP Code. Inspiration for the contest came from the O, Miami Poetry Festival and WLRN-Miami Herald News, the originators of the “zip ode” concept.

April is both National Poetry Month and Fair Housing Month, creating the perfect opportunity to engage our community in a project that highlights the ways our lives are shaped by where we live.

1st Place Tulia Pfeffinger

- 4 Outside the house, waiting
- 3 To go in.
- 6 I'm nervous to see the inside
- 0 (holdingmybreathholdingmybreathholdingmybreath)
- 6 The door opens and I gasp—

YOUTH



Second Place Mia Westfere

- 4 When the neighbors moved
- 3 And left me
- 6 Washed away with the sidewalk chalk,
- 1 Dust,
- 4 Once the sun reappeared

Third Place Yvonne Riley

- 4 Here in my neighborhood
- 3 I hear BOOM!
- 6 Could be fireworks, or a backfire
- 1 Confused
- 5 Probably somebody firing atta dude

1st Place Justin Longacre

- 4 Pokeweed around the Pontiac
- 3 in the backyard,
- 6 a beehive in the engine block,
- 1 dripping
- 3 oil and honey.

ADULT

Second Place Lydia Horvath

- 4 I'm in seventh grade
- 3 Waiting for TARTA
- 6 On the steps of El Tipico
- 0 (no one waiting here speaks to anyone else)
- 9 The others: smoking, sneering; Me: pretending I'm a horse

Third Place Keith Duerk

- 4 I see systemic poverty
- 3 ugly and unnecessary
- 6 potholes and panhandlers proliferate so abundantly
- 0 ...
- 5 Naively I dream of possibilities



ProMedica Says “I’m In!”

We were honored to be selected by ProMedica Foundation for their Impact and Inspire Event Series for Young Professionals (“I’m In”) on April 5 at The Blarney Event Center.

More than 100 young professionals attended this casual networking event to learn more about how The Fair Housing Center strengthens their community and make a direct impact by donating keys for a public art project.

Michael Marsh, President and CEO of The Fair Housing Center, delivered an inspiring presentation that explained how the neighborhood where we live affects our health and well-being. “People who live in high opportunity areas tend to have access to better education, jobs, and healthcare, while those who live in underserved areas make less money, have shorter lifespans, and are more likely to suffer from substance abuse, disease, and higher incarceration rates during their lifetimes,” stated Marsh. “By identifying and addressing these disparities, fair housing helps to build more diverse, vibrant communities, where everyone has the chance to reach their potential.”



Dane Turpening, Artist and Owner, Toledo Twisted Iron



TFHC Board Members Alan Sattler and Patty Wise, TFHC President and CEO Michael Marsh, and Christina Crites and Allison Murawski with ProMedica Foundations

unique way. Partnering with The Fair Housing Center is an exciting opportunity for our guests to contribute to public art while learning how housing affects an individual’s health and well-being,” said Allison Murawski, senior marketing specialist, ProMedica Foundations.

“I’m In” also featured the launch of our community-wide key collection. The Fair Housing Center is collecting thousands of keys (new and old) across the community to construct a unique outdoor sculpture designed and created, in-kind, by Toledo Twisted Iron. Artist and owner Dane Turpening unveiled sketches of the “Keys to Opportunity” sculpture at the event.

“Impact and Inspire is an event series designed to instill a culture of philanthropy by inviting individuals to give in a

Community Key Collection

Because of the generosity of those who attended “I’m In”, we were able to collect more than 7,500 keys in one night, getting our key collection off to a great start! Your support is vital for us to reach our goal of collecting 25,000 keys and we know you can help us get there!

By donating keys you have the unique opportunity to be part of this community art project, highlighting the role fair housing plays in opening the door to the vital resources that enable us to thrive.

Drop off your unused keys to our office
432 N. Superior St.
Toledo, OH 43604
Mon – Fri, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Interested in hosting a collection box at your office or business? Contact us!
419-243-6163 ext. 112



OHIO FAIR HOUSING SUMMIT

September 21, 2018
8:00 am - 3:30 pm

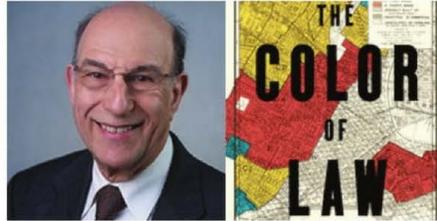
The Renaissance Hotel
Toledo, Ohio

Morning Keynote



Michael P. Marsh, CFRE

Lunch Keynote



Richard Rothstein

Afternoon Keynote



Dr. Terrell Strayhorn

Join us for the Ohio Fair Housing Summit, in partnership with the Ohio Diversity Council, on September 21, 2018 from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at The Renaissance Hotel in Toledo.

The 50th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act presents a special opportunity to draw together stakeholders across the state to examine the persistent barriers to equal opportunity, explore the connection between ZIP Codes and life outcomes, and share solutions for creating more diverse, stable neighborhoods.

This all-day conference will feature keynote speaker Richard Rothstein, author of "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America." Other notable presenters and panelists include Dr. Terrell Strayhorn, Lisa Rice, Stephen Dane, and Michael Marsh.

We are expecting hundreds of attendees from the financial, insurance, healthcare, housing, nonprofit, real estate, government, and human resource sectors to join us for this inspiring, informative summit around all facets of fair housing. Attendees can expect to leave more informed about the issues, more connected across relevant networks, and more eager to be a part of the solution in their communities.

Visit
ohiofairhousingsummit.org
to reserve
your space today.

Visit ohiofairhousingsummit.org for more information.



Put on your
Red Shoes
and Join Us for
the Happiest of
Happy Hours!

There's
No Place
like **HOME**

August 9, 2018

You don't want to miss our signature annual event featuring appetizers, entertainment, cash bar, and raffle prizes.

You are encouraged to wear red shoes to represent the journey we all take to find a place to call home. With your support, we can build diverse and vibrant neighborhoods where everyone can choose the home of their dreams.

Tickets are on sale now—for only \$10 you can enjoy a fun night while supporting a vital community resource.

Buy Tickets Online at toledofhc.org or Call 419-243-6163 ext. 112

WHO WE ARE

Get to know some of the passionate people who help us keep housing fair!

GETTING TO KNOW Donor Geri Yoder

Originally born and raised in Hawaii, Geri grew up surrounded by many cultures in a welcoming and inclusive environment. It wasn't until moving to Louisiana at age 15 that she first witnessed the devastating effects of discrimination. Believing that people should be treated equally, Geri says that in her ideal world, "there would be no barriers or fences."

Geri's upbringing in a loving and hard-working family also fostered her sense of generosity. Helping others was second nature and, "many times our family took in other families." Her grandparents played a special role in her life, serving as examples of how to be giving, caring, and loving, even when times were difficult. It's a lesson that has stuck with her through the years, and



while she feels fortunate and blessed today she says, "I don't really want it if I can't share it. No one is ever too good to put out a helping hand to someone else."

Geris Motto

"Be humble, be accepting, have compassion for those who aren't as fortunate as you."

It's this passion for equality and helping others that drives Geri to support the work of The Fair Housing Center. Hearing from former clients who shared their personal stories, she was saddened that people have to go through such experiences, but grateful to know that The Fair Housing Center is there to

help ensure it doesn't happen to anyone else. "I believe what they do and stand for is very important to our community. I taught my children to have giving hearts, and if they have the resources to help someone, they step up to the plate. This is the same philosophy I see in The Fair Housing Center."

GETTING TO KNOW Board Member Cherie Sears

In addition to serving on the Board for the last two years, Cherie currently chairs the Development and Outreach Committee. Her interest in civil rights developed while working in the lending industry, where she saw firsthand the need within our community.



She names Abraham Lincoln as her favorite social movement leader, stating, "I have been fascinated by him since I was a kid." She draws inspiration from people around her who faced difficult situations and instead of giving up, they "kept working to make their life a success."

If she had the option to trade places with anyone for a week, Cherie would choose the singer-songwriter Pink, admiring not only her voice, but also who she is as a person. "I have never been able to carry a tune but I love to sing! I was the only kid in fourth grade to not make the cut for choir!"

Cherie's Favorite Quote

"Life is like a coin; you can spend it any way you wish, but you can only spend it once." – Lillian Dickson

To anyone considering a career in nonprofit or civil rights, Cherie would encourage their decision by telling them, "There are so many people needing help in our communities," and for those who are willing to put in the hard work, "you will reap the rewards!"

Michael P. Marsh, CFRE
President & CEO

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toledofhc.org



VISION

The Fair Housing Center will be a leading visible force in preventing and correcting discriminatory practices.

MISSION

The Fair Housing Center is a non-profit civil rights agency dedicated to the elimination of housing discrimination, the promotion of housing choice and the creation of inclusive communities of opportunity. To achieve our mission, the Center engages in education and outreach, housing counseling, advocacy for anti-discriminatory housing policies, research and investigation and enforcement actions.



EXCELLENT RATING

We're proud to announce we once again received an EXCELLENT rating from HUD for our outstanding performance on our 2017 Education and Outreach grant! This is the highest rating, indicating we met or exceeded all goals. Thank you to all the donors, volunteers, and community partners working with us to create diverse, vibrant neighborhoods.



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- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchase to The Fair Housing Center



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With the Kroger Community Rewards program, you can help support the efforts of The Fair Housing Center every time you buy groceries at Kroger. Enrollment is simple and free!

- Visit kroger.com
- Sign in or create an account
- On the Community tab, select Kroger Community Rewards
- Click Enroll Now, then Enroll
- Search by group number **97582** or the name **Fair Housing Opportunities of Northwest Ohio, Inc.**
- Click Enroll