

FAIR HOUSING ADVOCATE

Summer 2018

Creating Inclusive Communities
of Opportunity



There's
No Place
like HOME

August 9, 2018



Left to right: Dametris Ross-Voet, TFHC client, Dane Turpening, Artist and Owner of Toledo Twisted Iron, and Alan Sattler, TFHC Board Chair

More than 200 guests joined us for our fourth annual happiest of happy hours, There's No Place Like Home, on August 9 at The Pinnacle. DJ Mpress had guests on their feet dancing and the room was decked out in Wizard of Oz-themed décor. The evening's festivities included raffles and auction items, culminating in a Gift of the Heart auction performed by Beth Rose.



Kristian Brown, 13abc news anchor, emceed.

Known as the "red shoe event," attendees were encouraged to wear red shoes in honor of the evening's theme and to represent the journey we all take to find a place to call home.

Kristian Brown emceed the event as part of our year-long media partnership with 13abc to commemorate the 50th anniversary of The Fair Housing Act.

A powerful testimonial was delivered by Dametris Ross-Voet, a client who turned to The Fair Housing Center when she faced unfair treatment. Finding a home to rent for her and her daughter, Dametris was relieved to find a safe, stable place to stay after experiencing homelessness. However, when the property manager refused to make repairs and made discriminatory comments, Dametris contacted us. We were able to recover monetary damages for the mistreatment she endured and will also provide training for the property management company to help ensure someone else does not have to go through this same painful experience.



This year's event featured a live sculpture creation by Dane Turpening, Artist and Owner of Toledo Twisted Iron. This past spring, The Fair Housing Center collected nearly 20,000 old keys from across the community that will be fused together to create a new outdoor sculpture. The unique "Keys to Opportunity" sculpture will represent the role fair housing plays in opening the door to the vital resources that enable us to thrive. Guests attending There's No Place Like Home had a special opportunity to see the artwork in progress as Mr. Turpening constructed a portion of the sculpture during the event!





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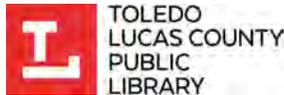
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Community Collaborations Improve Accessibility

Disability advocates from local groups including The Ability Center, The Fair Housing Center, Toledo Lucas County Commission on Disabilities, and Community Advocates for Transportation Rights (CATR) hosted a news conference on August 20 to announce a new TARTA bus stop located near Charming Charlie at Franklin Park Mall.

This achievement is a culmination of several years of grassroots advocacy efforts to improve accessibility for people living with disabilities. With the added bus stop, patrons will now have a direct walking path to the entrance of the building, providing individuals with mobility disabilities safer access.

“The bus stop demonstrates what we can do when people with disabilities and businesses in our community work together to make our spaces more accessible,” shared Katherine Hunt Thomas, Disability Rights Lawyer, The Ability Center.



“As our aging and disability populations continue to grow, our community has a responsibility to provide housing and public spaces that are welcoming and accessible for all,” stated Christina Rodriguez, Staff Attorney at The Fair Housing Center.

Organizers hope this addition will set the tone for other businesses and entities to ensure their property is accessible to everyone. “It will be tremendously helpful to people with disabilities who cannot walk long distances, use wheelchairs, or other mobility aides. It will also help senior citizens and families with small children board the bus more safely,” said Jo Rita Fox, a member of Community Advocates for Transportation Rights.



Jo Rita Fox, member of Community Advocates for Transportation Rights

The Fair Housing Center and the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority (LMHA) announced a joint effort to ensure public housing programs and services are accessible for persons with disabilities. A three-year agreement paves the way for LMHA residents to benefit from improved processes for accommodations and modifications in their homes that are medically necessary.

Demetria Simpson, LMHA’s President and CEO said, “The collaboration with The Fair Housing Center, other key advocacy groups, and community partners is a very good beginning to rewrite and redefine policy so that individuals receive the reasonable accommodations they need to have a better quality of life.”

“As a community we need to recognize the needs of this growing population and provide housing to accommodate those needs,” stated Michael Marsh, President and CEO of The Fair Housing Center. “Often this involves simple changes that make a big difference in the life of a person with a disability.” In some instances, tenants may seek to move into a different unit that is more suitable; a single tenant may require a two-bedroom unit to provide space for oxygen tanks and other sizable medical equipment, or a family might seek to move to a non-smoking location to reduce the impact on their daughter’s respiratory disabilities. In other situations, minor physical changes can enable someone to have full use of their home; a tenant who is blind and has arthritis might be unable to use his kitchen cabinets unless knobs are installed.

George Thomas, the ABLE attorney representing The Fair Housing Center, stated, “Under the law all persons with disabilities should feel that they can request reasonable accommodations and modifications and know that their requests will be considered in a timely manner. This partnership helps make that very basic right a reality.”

Standing Up for Our Client's Rights

Following a diagnosis of a chronic condition, Zenola Sherman experienced mobility issues. She looked forward to moving into permanent housing after staying in a nursing home, but soon discovered that the dizziness and unsteady gait caused by her disability made it difficult to navigate the bathroom in her apartment. Zenola's doctor and therapist recommended a walk-in tub, an option that would be easier for her to use and help mitigate safety hazards. However, Zenola's request for a reasonable modification was denied by her housing provider, and after contacting numerous resources that were unable to help, she found The Fair Housing Center. After a two-year long process during which we stood by her side, she was finally able to obtain the walk-in tub, making her home more accessible and allowing her to live a fuller, more independent lifestyle.

Bank of America Charged with Neglecting Foreclosed Homes in Toledo and 36 Other Cities Across the U.S.

In June, The Fair Housing Center joined the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), 18 other fair housing organizations, and two homeowners in Maryland to file a federal lawsuit against Bank of America, N.A., Bank of America Corp., and Safeguard Properties Management, LLC ("Bank of America/Safeguard"). The lawsuit alleges intentional failure to provide routine exterior maintenance and marketing at Bank of America-owned homes in working- and middle-class African-American and Latino neighborhoods, while consistently maintaining similar bank-owned homes in comparable white neighborhoods. More than 1,600 homes were investigated, including 44 homes in the Toledo area.



The data presented in the federal lawsuit, which is supported by 35,000 photographs, shows a glaring pattern of discriminatory conduct by Bank of America/Safeguard. In neighborhoods of color, evidence shows wildly overgrown grass and weeds, unsecured doors and windows, damaged steps and handrails, accumulated trash and debris, unsecured pools, graffiti, and even dead animals decaying in yards. Meanwhile, homes in predominantly white working- and middle-class neighborhoods are far more likely to have the lawns mowed and edged regularly, invasive weeds and vines removed, windows and doors secured or repaired, debris and trash removed, leaves raked, and graffiti erased from the property.

"Owning a home is the foundation of both personal wealth and neighborhood stability," stated Michael Marsh, President and CEO of The Fair Housing Center. "Neglect and blight of foreclosed homes only adds to the disinvestment that has been devastating communities of color for decades. It is impossible to address the need without acknowledging the cause—and holding those entities accountable."





Present

OHIO FAIR HOUSING SUMMIT

Session #2: Law & Order – Fair Housing Policy in Action has been approved by the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education for 1.25 total CLE hours instruction.

September 21, 2018

8:00 am - 3:30 pm

The Renaissance Hotel

Toledo, Ohio

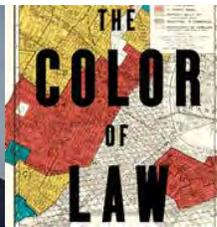
For more information or to register, visit ohiofairhousingsummit.org



Michael P. Marsh, CFRE
President & CEO
The Fair Housing Center
Presenting: "Zip Code Matters"



Richard Rothstein
Author "The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America"
Research Associate at the Economic Policy Institute



Dr. Terrell Strayhorn
Professor & Founder/CEO
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Courtyard Connections

October 10, 5-6:30 p.m.

in the Courtyard of Justice next to The Fair Housing Center

Join us as we unveil a new outdoor sculpture "Keys to Opportunity"!

This unique, public artwork is created from thousands of old keys donated from people across our community.



WHO WE ARE

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



BOARD PROFILE – Alan Sattler, Board Chair

Serving on The Fair Housing Center’s Board since last year, Alan was recently elected to Board Chair. Alan’s roots are local, as he grew up on a farm in Perrysburg Township and then earned both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from The University of Toledo.

His interest in civil rights stems from a passion for improving the lives of others, and if given the opportunity to trade places with anyone, he would choose “someone who has tremendous resources so that I could use those resources to help others.” Alan names Dr. King as his favorite social movement leader, citing his “commitment to do what was right, regardless of the consequences.”

Alan’s Favorite Quote

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Understanding the important role of our future generations, Alan spends time mentoring young professionals and teaching students. If one of them asked his advice about pursuing a career in civil rights or nonprofit, he would tell them, “if you have a passion for it, you will never regret it.”

“I’m not leaving fair housing. I’m taking it with me.”

In June, the Board of Directors of The Fair Housing Center announced the departure of long-time President and CEO, Michael Marsh. Mr. Marsh began his new career as President and CEO at Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii on August 1, 2018.

The Fair Housing Center has engaged a consultant to assist the Board with strategic planning and facilitate a national search for a replacement. Mr. Marsh will continue to assist the Board and staff of The Fair Housing Center through the transition process to ensure seamless continuity of operations.

“My life has been devoted to issues of equity, opportunity, and diversity and my academic, personal, and professional experiences have prepared me for my new role in Hawaii,” stated Mr. Marsh.



Regarded as a civil rights champion, Mr. Marsh has been with The Fair Housing Center for more than 20 years. Two of the organization’s largest settlements have occurred under his leadership, resulting in the reinvestment of more than \$5 million in the urban core to revitalize and support homeownership in Toledo’s underserved neighborhoods. “The Fair Housing Center has served as a national leader in expanding opportunity. I’m proud to have been a part of that, and confident the organization will continue to play a critical role in our community long after my departure,” said Mr. Marsh. “We’re lucky to have a passionate and dedicated team of Board and staff who will continue to fight every day to keep Dr. King’s dream alive.”

Interested in leading our team of passionate, dedicated fair housing advocates?
We’re hiring for a new President and CEO. Apply online at toledofhc.org/jobpostingceo/

Michael P. Marsh, CFRE
President & CEO

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Cherie Sears
Ernest Walker, Jr.
Mary-Thom Williams

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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.



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