



Creating Inclusive Communities of Opportunity

FAIR HOUSING ADVOCATE

Quarterly Newsletter for The Fair Housing Center

Spring 2017

Zip Odes Capture Neighborhood Identity

By inviting participants to pen short poems inspired by their ZIP Code, the Ode to the ZIP Code poetry contest inspires dialogue about how where we live shapes our experiences. This second annual creative writing opportunity is a partnership of The Fair Housing Center, The Arts Commission, Toledo Lucas County Public Library, and Toledo City Paper. “Zip odes” are formatted as five line poems, with the number of words in each line of the poem determined by the corresponding digit in a person’s ZIP Code.

Entries were accepted online and evaluated by judges, and this year more than 250 poems were submitted, representing 28 unique ZIP Codes. Selected finalists were invited to read their poems at a special event on 419 Day at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Main Library. Winners were chosen based on the live performances and awarded cash prizes, and the top entries were also published in the Toledo City Paper.

Because April is both National Poetry Month and Fair Housing Month, it’s an ideal opportunity for the community to capture the identity of their neighborhoods in a creative way, and highlight the role that place plays in determining life outcomes. Inspiration for the contest came from the O, Miami Poetry Festival and WLRN-Miami Herald News, the originators of the “zip ode” concept.



First Place

Lydia Horvath

- 4 Near Detroit and Airport
- 3 We finally settled
- 6 Family of six, crowding into rentals
- 0 (here’s where I won’t discuss
the summer we were homeless)
- 9 But there on Somerset, my very own
pink bedroom

Second Place

Sandra Rivers-Gill

- 4 Rib grilling mouthwatering summer
- 3 Thick meaty bones
- 6 Saucy covered hands play muggy tunes
- 1 Scat
- 5 Those ants love to dance

Third Place

Justin Longacre

- 4 Tailpipes shake babyboomer sternums
- 3 outside Toledo cantinas.
- 6 Waxed black thoraxes recline on
kickstands
- 1 laughing
- 3 from chrome throats.

COMMUNITY Connections

As a means of encouraging collaboration and increasing community investment opportunities, The Fair Housing Center invited the Detroit CDFI Coalition to deliver a presentation to local CDFIs at United Way on February 6. Tahirih Ziegler, Executive Director of Detroit LISC, provided an overview of the Detroit CDFI Coalition, a collaboration of stakeholders working to expand the reach of CDFI investments and services in Detroit. Attendees learned how this collaborative approach can achieve greater impact on community development and neighborhood revitalization than is typically possible when entities function independently. Toledo CDFIs were invited to explore the possibility of using this model to advance local efforts.

On February 14, The Fair Housing Center hosted the Toledo Chapter meeting of the Ohio Diversity Council, an organization dedicated to enhancing appreciation for and understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion. The gathering provided an opportunity to screen the 40th anniversary documentary *Fair Housing: A Place to Call Home* and inform the council's membership about how our agency works to remove the barriers people often face when trying to access housing of their choice. This event was a continuation of the partnership between the organizations, as Michael Marsh, President and CEO of The Fair Housing Center, was recently appointed to serve as President of the local Toledo Chapter of the Ohio Diversity Council.

Broadening its efforts to serve the Latino community, The Fair Housing Center hosted the Latino Alliance of Northwest Ohio's meeting on March 22. The alliance is focused on fostering relationships among Latino individuals and organizations that serve Latino populations, and The Fair Housing Center recently joined as an organizational member. Hosting the meeting provided an opportunity for the Latino Alliance to become more familiar with The Fair Housing Center's mission and services, and a brief presentation outlined the agency's current enforcement efforts, including increasing accessibility for persons with disabilities and expanding opportunities for homeownership and banking services within the urban core. As a demonstration of our outreach activities designed to raise awareness and prevent discrimination, TFHC shared copies of recently translated brochures that were created to empower LEP populations with knowledge of their fair housing rights.



The Fair Housing Center welcomed the Latino Alliance of Northwest Ohio to host their monthly meeting.

First Federal Lends Support for Fairness

The Fair Housing Center received a \$2,500 donation from First Federal Bank on February 14, presented at the ribbon cutting for the opening of its new bank branch. The generous gift was offered for the purchase of a bench in the Courtyard of Justice, a recently revamped public green space outside The Fair Housing Center's building. First Federal has now joined a growing list of community supporters—both individuals and organizations—who have pledged their support for fairness and equality by purchasing bricks and benches in the courtyard which now serves as a welcoming gathering space for the community.

If you or your organization are interested in helping to further our mission and display your name in the heart of downtown, contact Sena Friedman at 419-243-6163 ext. 112 or sfriedman@toledofhc.org.



TFHC President and CEO Michael Marsh, First Federal Bank Market Area President Tim Harris, and TFHC Board Member Patty Wise.

The Fair Housing Center was pleased to attend First Federal's ribbon cutting ceremony to announce the opening of a newly established bank branch at Seaway Marketplace on Cherry Street in Toledo. Offering a full service branch in the urban core is one of several steps First Federal is taking to expand its reach into traditionally underserved neighborhoods. Maintaining bank branches in communities of color and low to moderate income neighborhoods is a vital means to ensure more families can benefit from reliable, stable banking products and services that lead to financial stability and help them pursue the American Dream.

Fair Housing on the Big Screen

Fair Housing: A Place to Call Home was selected as part of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library's Film Focus series. Created to commemorate The Fair Housing Center's 40th anniversary in 2015, the film chronicles the agency's history and impact on the national fair housing movement.

On April 24, the film was screened at the Main Library and featured a panel discussion with President and CEO Michael Marsh and Director of Communications and Outreach Sarah Jenkins. The event offered an opportunity to showcase Toledo's leading role in civil rights and to discuss current barriers that still persist, making The Fair Housing Center's work vital to ensure equal access to opportunity.



WHO WE ARE

Here at The Fair Housing Center there are many people who put countless hours and enormous amounts of effort into the agency's mission. We would like to offer you the chance to get to know some of the determined and energetic staff and board members who work hard to keep housing fair!

GETTING TO KNOW Staff Member Mike Fehlen - Controller

Helping The Fair Housing Center maintain fiscal responsibility, Mike Fehlen has served in the crucial role of Controller for the last four years. Although active in the community as a volunteer, he wasn't aware of the prevalence of housing discrimination until being hired by TFHC. "My experience here has really made me appreciate the importance of civil rights issues."

Mike recognizes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as his favorite social movement leader, citing his promotion of non-violent protest. He also draws inspiration from those who surround him every day at TFHC, stating "Everyone here works hard and is dedicated to the cause of fair housing."

As a sports fan, Mike would choose to trade places with LeBron James, "but not for more than a week as I could never handle the media scrutiny he is under."

For those seeking a career in nonprofit, Mike advises to find something you are passionate about. "There is no greater satisfaction than being able to use your talents to help others."

Mike's Favorite Quote

"I live in my own little world. But it's ok, they know me here."

—Lauren Myracle

GETTING TO KNOW Board Member Cheryl Slack

Cheryl has served on TFHC's board for nearly two years. Originally from Detroit, she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan.

Cheryl's Favorite Quote

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."
1 Peter 5:6

Martin Luther King, Jr. served as more than just an inspirational figure for Cheryl. Her uncle was friends with MLK, one of the civil rights leader's last speeches was delivered at a church in her family's community in Memphis, and Cheryl attended school with one of MLK's nephews in Philadelphia. Driven by a desire to help those who are less fortunate, Cheryl and her husband established New Creation Ministries, a church in Grand Rapids, Michigan that strives to assist those in the local community.

Recognizing Michelle Obama as a role model for all women, Cheryl would choose to trade places with her. Cheryl is impressed by her ability to tackle a serious problem by creating a healthy food program for children, and admires Michelle's commitment to her family. She also acknowledges the significance of Michelle's accomplishments, stating, "Given her background, you wouldn't expect her to attend an Ivy League school, but she beat the odds."

For Cheryl, having a passion for helping the community is necessary if you want to work in nonprofit. "It has to be something you love, not just a job."

Michael P. Marsh, CFRE
President & CEO

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Cheryl Slack
Ernest Walker Jr.
Patricia Wise

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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.

Looking to Rent a Unique Office Space in the Heart of Downtown?

We are renting out our garden level, which features up to 2,655 sq ft of office space including five private offices, large open office area, two restrooms, and a conference room. Lease includes access to a private entrance, parking lot, and elevator. Conveniently located near many popular downtown destinations and offers easy access to public transportation. Our building's uncommon architecture and décor will leave a lasting impression you won't soon forget. A perfect option for anyone looking for a budget-friendly space that offers flexibility.

If you are interested in this special opportunity, please contact Hunt Sears at Danberry at 419-250-2769 or hunt@danberry.com.



Three Ways to Support Fairness & Equality!

Text the amount you would like to donate to:

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(4483)

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- When purchasing items, please indicate Fair Housing Opportunities of Northwest Ohio, Inc. as your charitable organization of choice.
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Enroll Your Kroger Card

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



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