
◆ Open House ◆

Newsletter of the Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County

SPRING 2001

The Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County is committed to ensuring equal housing opportunities regardless of race, religion, gender, age, disability, familial status or national origin.

We carry out our mission through education & outreach, complaint reception & resolution, advocacy, monitoring of discriminatory housing practices & assistance in finding open & affordable housing.

STAFF

Elizabeth Albert
Executive Director

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Assistant Director

Liane Davis Anderson
Education & Outreach

Nina Amster
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*APRIL IS
— FAIR HOUSING —
MONTH!!*



UPCOMING EVENTS

FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR: BEST PRACTICES
Wednesday, April 18 1:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

LANDLORD WORKSHOP:
HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM
(Formerly the Section 8 Program)
Tuesday, April 24 6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

SEMINAR: FAIR HOUSING OVERVIEW
—FOR HOUSING COUNSELORS—
Wednesday, April 25 9:30 a.m.—12 noon

FAIR HOUSING MONTH POSTER CONTEST
—JUDGING & AWARDS CEREMONY—
Thursday, April 26 6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

NORRISTOWN COMMUNITY MEETING
(PANIC SELLING, PREDATORY LENDING, NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES)
Saturday, May 5 10:00 a.m.—12 noon

DETAILS INSIDE



COMBATING DISABILITIES DISCRIMINATION

New FHIP Education & Outreach Grant

We are pleased to have received a grant, in conjunction with the Delaware Valley Fair Housing Partnership, focusing on discrimination against persons with disabilities. To further our commitment to expand our services to people with disabilities in Montgomery County, the Council is participating in a Fair Housing Initiative Project (FHIP) Education and Outreach project with our Partnership.

The focus of the project is to provide fair housing education and outreach to people with disabilities and community based agencies which serve people with disabilities. A second objective is to reach people with disabilities of Latino backgrounds. The Council will conduct a Fair Housing Education Workshop aimed at addressing fair housing problems faced by underserved people with disabilities in the County.

ACCESSIBILITY TESTING—FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Coupled with our work under the FHIP grant, the Council recently trained testers to survey sites in Montgomery County for compliance with the Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines. The training was held at Liberty Resources, a Center for Independent Living. The Council now has testers ready to conduct accessibility surveys in the County. Site visits are underway.

CASE UPDATES

DISCLAIMER: In all settled cases reported in this newsletter, the defendant, unless otherwise noted, denies the allegations of discrimination made by the plaintiff and the parties have agreed to resolve the case prior to a trial or hearing.

Schmidt v. Gary J. Greco et al.

In August 2000, the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP), with the assistance from the Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County, filed a fair housing racial discrimination suit in Federal Court on behalf of Roslyn Schmidt. The suit was filed against Gary J. Greco, Joseph Greco, and Rosemarie Greco for refusal to rent an apartment to Ms. Schmidt because of the race of her young son. (See description of the case in "OPEN HOUSE"—Fall 2000). Testing by the Council confirmed the racial discrimination.

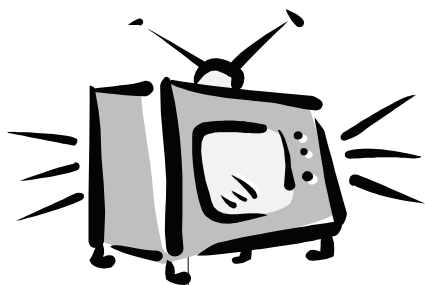
The suit was settled in February 2001. The terms of the settlement are confidential.

The Council and PILCOP worked closely together on this case as well as many others. They each are part of the Delaware Valley Fair Housing Partnership, along with the Tenant's Action Group—Fair Housing Center and the Housing Consortium for Disabled Individuals (HCDI).

FHMC v. Abrams Run et al.

The Fair Housing Council's complaint against Abrams Run Apts., Gambone Brothers Development, Inc. and Continental Reality was settled at a HUD conciliation meeting. The complaint alleged that Abrams Run had discriminatory policies against families with children, steering families with children to first floor units and subjecting families with children to different leasing terms and conditions.

The enforcement agreement includes: monetary damages; a change in rental policies at Abrams Run and Continental Reality; and required Fair Housing training of the respondents, to be provided by the Council.



RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Here's What We've Been Doing

NORRISTOWN COMMUNITY TV CHANNEL

WE'RE ON TV!!

Beth & Liane star in their "own show"—found on Suburban Cable TV, Channel 3. They "premiered" on the Norristown Public Access Channel in a 23 minute program highlighting the Fair Housing Council and the agency's programs. The program airs various times a week at different times during the day. It is scheduled to run throughout the rest of the year.

BUS ADVERTISING

Look for our ads on the buses!!!! With the support of Montgomery County CDBG, Lower Merion township and the Borough of Norristown the Council recently initiated a Fair Housing bus advertising campaign. Look for our public service announcements on SEPTA buses which run throughout Montgomery County.

MAILING TO NEIGHBORS IN NORRISTOWN

2500 households in Norristown neighborhoods were sent 3 specific flyers in our newest awareness campaign to fight housing discrimination. The three flyers spoke of three dis-

tinct issues: HATE CRIMES; PANIC SELLING/BLOCKBUSTING; & PREDATORY LENDING.

As a result of our campaign, families are coming forward with such problems. Bravo to those people who stand up against those horrible practices.

FLYERS TO NORRISTOWN-AREA AGENCIES

25 Agencies received the same three flyers which were mailed to the 2500 households spoke of above.

NORRISTOWN COMMUNITY MEETING

On May 5th, the Council is sponsoring a community meeting to discuss neighborhood problems seen throughout Norristown—those topics highlighted in the flyers spoke of above, HATE CRIMES, PANIC SELLING/BLOCKBUSTING, & PREDATORY LENDING. (See April Events for details)

FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR: BEST PRACTICES

We had a great turnout at our December fair housing seminar with over 40 people in attendance. The seminar was held in December at the Montgomery County Community Services Center in Norristown.

An overview of the fair housing laws was presented by Ray Cartwright, Housing Director of the PA Human Relations Commission. As well, Mr. Cartwright presented a best practices approach to fair

housing in the real estate industry. He also touched upon the heinous practices of panic selling and predatory lending.

Jackie Simon, realtor and fair housing advocate, also presented best practices, focusing on persons with disabilities.

COME & ATTEND OUR 4/18/01 "BEST PRACTICES" SEMINAR IN BRYN MAWR (see April Events for details)

2001 POSTER CONTEST

3 Schools are participating in our Fair Housing Month Poster Contest. They are: Elkins Park School; Jenkintown Elementary; and Lower Salford Hills. April 26th is our countywide contest.

FAIR HOUSING WORKSHOPS

Liane has been conducting numerous workshops throughout the county—both in-service trainings for staff as well as workshops for the agencies clients and people of the community.

**IF YOUR AGENCY IS INTERESTED IN HOSTING A FAIR HOUSING TRAINING/WORKSHOP, please contact Liane at:
(215) 576-7711**

ANNUAL MEETING/OPEN HOUSE

The Council hosted an open house on January 26th to pre-

(Continued on page 4)

sent our new office to the public. As well our annual board meeting was held. Much thanks to Eastern Arts & Technology and Gary Albert, Culinary Arts Instructor at Eastern, for their contribution of the amazing spread of food.

HOMESEAKER'S LIST ON-LINE!!

THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF JUSTIN ALBERT (son of Beth!), we are now on-line with the Homeseeker's List. Our Homeseeker's List is a compilation of apartment listings from

various Montgomery County newspapers. We take the most affordable, reasonable apartments and put them into our list. It can be accessed on our website:
www.fairhousing.com/fhcmc.
OR—call for a hard copy.

TESTERS WANTED!!

We are seeking individuals of all backgrounds to work as testers on an as-needed basis. Testers are needed to visit rental properties in Montgomery County, and helps us monitor Fair Housing compliance. Testing is an investigative tool that is used to verify incidents of housing discrimination.

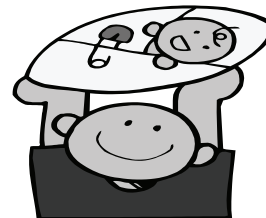
Testers are paid a flat rate of \$50.00 per rental test. A typical rental test takes approximately 2-3 hours. Work hours are very flexible and may be done when it is convenient for you. This is a great way to earn extra cash while supporting an important cause!

In order to participate, testers must first attend a training session. If interested, please call Lily Park at: (215) 576-771

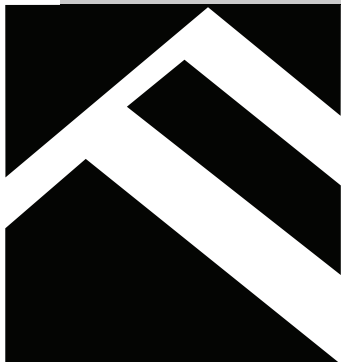
NEW FAIR HOUSING BABY!!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST FAIR HOUSING BABY!

We are pleased to introduce the youngest member of our fair housing family, Lindsay Leavitt, born November 20th, 2000, to Nina Amster, our Housing Advocate and her husband Doug Leavitt. Lindsay was welcomed home by her sister, Gabrielle who is two.



GREAT JOB, NINA!!



FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR: BEST PRACTICES

WHEN:

APRIL 18, 2001
1—5:00 PM

WHERE:

BRYN MAWR CENTER
9 S. BRYN MAWR AVENUE
BRYN MAWR, PA 19010

COST:

\$35-GENERAL
25-NONPROFIT
10-STUDENT

TOPICS COVERED:

- *Overview of Fair Housing Laws*
- *Best Practices*
 - *Application Process*
 - *Serving Families with Children*
 - *Ad Placement*
 - *Serving Persons with Disabilities*
- *Blockbusting*

**3.5 CLE
Credits**

TO REGISTER:

NAME: _____

AGENCY/COMPANY: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELE. #: _____

PAYMENT AMOUNT: _____

MAIL PAYMENT TO:

Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County
105 East Glenside Ave., Suite E
Glenside, PA 19038

Phone: 215-576-7711
Fax: 215-576-1509
Email: fairhous@libertynet.org

UPCOMING EVENTS — Details —

LANDLORD WORKSHOP: HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

WHEN: APRIL 24TH
6:30—8:30 (Doors open at 6)

WHERE: Marriott Hotel
Conshohocken, PA

ATTENTION LANDLORDS—Whether you are an experienced landlord or purchasing your first investment, you should know about this excellent opportunity to increase you income potential, screen your tenants better and be a more successful landlord.

- Learn how to participate in the “Housing Choice Voucher Program”
- What’s new & how the program has changed
- Get the facts—Dispel myths

RSVP: (610) 275-5720

SEMINAR: FAIR HOUSING OVERVIEW —FOR HOUSING COUNSELORS—

WHEN: APRIL 25TH
9:30—12:00 noon

WHERE: Mellon Bank Center, Forum Room
1735 Market Street, 8th Floor
Philadelphia, PA

ATTENTION HOUSING COUNSELORS—The Delaware Valley Fair Housing Partnership is sponsoring a morning seminar for housing counselors to become familiar with the fair housing laws as well as provide practical information and guidance in order to better assist consumers.

RSVP: (215) 864-7286 Ronnie Latham, Fair Housing Action Center

FAIR HOUSING MONTH POSTER CONTEST: JUDGING & AWARDS CEREMONY

WHEN: APRIL 26TH
6:30—7:30

WHERE: Fair Housing Council of MontCo.—Office

COME PARTICIPATE—Join us in finding out who will be the 2001 winning student AND what our next t-shirt will look like! All are welcome.

NORRISTOWN COMMUNITY MEETING

WHEN: MAY 5TH
10:00—12:00 noon

WHERE: Norristown Public Library

DROP IN—Feeling pressure to sell your home? Receiving repeated solicitations from realtors? Learn more about your rights! Find out more about illegal practices that may be occurring in your neighborhood!

CALL: (215) 576-7711



**IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN DIS-
CRIMINATED AGAINST WHILE SEARCH-
ING FOR A HOME, CALL US AT:
(215) 576-7711**



On April 26th, judges will chose the winner of the 2001 Fair Housing Poster Contest. T-shirts will be ready for sale right after!

Since 1997 we have been promoting this children's program on combating housing discrimination. T-shirts have been made of the winning posters every year. All the t-shirts are available for \$10 and come in various sizes. Call for details & orders.

**TO PLACE YOUR ORDER,
Mail a \$10 check to:**

**Fair Housing Council of MontCo.
P.O. Box 578, Glenside, PA 19038**

Help us fight against discrimination... BECOME A MEMBER!!!

The Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County invites you to become a member. The Council is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to fighting housing discrimination in Montgomery County. As the only local agency whose sole mission is to ensure equal housing opportunities in Montgomery County, the Council has been working hard for you! By becoming a member, you can help guarantee that fair housing remains a part of your community.

With your support, the Council will continue providing educational programs to consumers and real estate professionals, advocacy for victims of housing discrimination and access to information on open and affordable housing in Montgomery County.

YES, I'D LIKE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL!

Name or Organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Choose One: _____ 20% Seminar Discount
OR

_____ T-shirt
SIZE: ___ Small ___ Medium ___ Large ___ X-Large

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

r Individual (\$25)

r Nonprofit Org. (\$35)

r Corporate (\$50)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MAIL TO: P.O. Box 578
Glenside, PA 19038

Questions? Call us at (215)576-7711

**Thank you for supporting the fight against
housing discrimination!**



Fair Housing Council of
Montgomery County
P.O. Box 578
Glenside, PA 19038

email: fairhous@libertynet.org

In This Issue...

APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH!! Join us for events—details inside.



TO REPEAT—

**WE ALREADY
MOVED!!!!**

NEW ADDRESS:

**105 E East Glenside Avenue
Glenside, PA 19038**

(NOTE: The office # listed in last newsletter WAS INCORRECT)

**SAME TELEPHONE #:
(215) 576-7711**

SAME FAX #: