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# ◆ Open House ◆

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Newsletter of the Fair Housing Council of Montgomery County

SUMMER 2000

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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

Renee Langley  
Executive Director

Lily Chun  
Assistant Director

Liane Davis Anderson  
Education & Outreach

Nina Amster  
Housing Advocate

P.O. BOX 578  
GLENSIDE, PA 19038  
TELE: (215) 576-7711  
FAX: (215) 576-1509

website: [www.fairhousing.com/fhcmc](http://www.fairhousing.com/fhcmc)

Email: [fairhous@libertynet.org](mailto:fairhous@libertynet.org)

## *FAIR HOUSING MONTH 2000*

### *What a Success!!*

April is "Fair Housing Month" and this year we sponsored three very different events to celebrate fair housing in our community. Here is a brief look at what was happening.

MARCH 31st

#### *FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR: Compliance Issues Concerning Housing & the Disabled*

We got an early start and kicked off Fair Housing Month with a Disabilities Seminar held in Norristown. We had a nice turnout with approximately 30 people from various backgrounds attending. Stephen Gold, an attorney for the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, lead the seminar in an overview of the fair housing laws and a discussion of reasonable accommodations and modifications. Dr. Robert Ardinger, a nationally-recognized fair housing expert and advocate for the disabled, wrapped up the seminar with a discussion on accessibility guidelines (design & construction requirements) and universal design strategies. Materials are still available for \$5.

APRIL 12th

#### *FAIR HOUSING SUMMIT*

The Fair Housing Council, along with the Delaware Valley Fair Housing Partnership, hosted a fair housing breakfast for community advocates at the offices of Dechert, Price & Rhoads. Nearly 50 fair housing and community advocates came to share their ideas and expertise as well as strengthen existing relationships between agencies. The group discussed challenges that advocates face in combating the barriers of housing discrimination in the greater Philadelphia area.

APRIL 5th

#### *"APRIL IS FAIR HOUSING MONTH" POSTER CONTEST*

Four schools participated in our program which is specifically devised to teach children about discrimination in our neighborhoods. Those schools were from Plymouth-Whitemarsh, Jenkintown, Cheltenham, and Souderton townships. The winners of each school competed for first place in the countywide contest held on April 5th in our office. The winner was Julia Cooper of Jenkintown. She received a \$200 US savings bond donated by the MontCo. Assoc. of Realtors and her design was made into a T-shirt to support the program. T-shirts are \$15 and are available in large or X-large.

## *THE COUNCIL PRESENTS AWARD AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING*

### *Martin Luther King, Jr. Award of Outstanding Community Service*

On January 21, the Council held its fourth Annual Meeting at Williamson's in Horsham. We honored an exceptional candidate with this year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Award of Outstanding Community Service—Denise Hoeksema.

Ms. Hoeksema has been teaching for over 15 years at the Elkins Park School. She is a Reading & Language Arts teacher. She was chosen as the 2000 recipient because of her dedication to teaching young children the principles of fairness and equality.

Ms. Hoeksema has traveled extensively, off the beaten path, to learn about different people and their cultures. She draws from her own life experiences to teach her students to likewise learn about one another and appreciate each other's differences. Ms. Hoeksema says she believes it is important to bring the discussion of ideas on equality and fairness into the classroom.

The keynote address was given by Raymond Cartwright, Director of Housing of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Mr. Cartwright focused on significant developments in civil rights and fair housing law. He specifically dedicated his remarks to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., emphasizing Dr. King's dream has not yet been achieved. Mr.

Cartwright encouraged all of us to continue to work together towards making

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*"I do not fear the shouts of the evil as much as I do the silence of the good... We must work unceasingly to lift this nation to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness."*

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Letter from Birmingham Jail

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Dr. King's dream a reality.

In Mr. Cartwright's conclusion, he poignantly quoted Dr. King, from his letter from the Birmingham jail. "I do not fear the shouts of the evil as much as I do the silence of the good...We must work unceasingly to lift this nation to a higher destiny, to a new plateau of compassion, to a more noble expression of humaneness."

Among those in attendance were: Rep. Lawrence Curry, who was last year's award recipient; office of Rep. Connie Williams; Mr. David Kraynick, Cheltenham Township Manager; the Council's Board of Directors; Council staff; Council members; fair housing advocates; and

some long time civil rights activists. At the close of the luncheon, our Board President, Mary-Louise Homicki, was presented a surprise token of appreciation for her long time service and commitment to the Council. As she received her gifts, she took the opportunity to encourage others to join the Board.

**Much thanks to all who attended!**

**Come join us next year!!**

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## HOMEBUYING SEMINARS

The Fair Housing Council is pleased to have Nina Amster on board as our new Housing Advocate.

Picture of  
Nina

Since starting here last November, Nina has organized and presented four home-buying seminars—

and with great success! The seminars cover the mortgage process, real estate agencies, home inspections, and special grant programs. Here is what has been happening.

### Ardmore Seminar:

In December, the Montgomery County Partnership for Home Ownership along with the Council presented their first joint Home Ownership Seminar. It was held on the Main Line at the Ardmore Avenue Community Center. Over 25 people attended. Much thanks goes out to our dynamic speakers: Tom Forker of ComNet Mortgage; Nora Winnemore of Prudential Fox & Roach; and Patricia Hankinson of the Department of Housing Services.

We are happy to say that as a result of the seminar, numerous people sought out special grant programs and two attendees have purchased homes through Nora Winnemore.

### Dock Village Seminar:

Next, the Fair Housing Council held a February Home Ownership Seminar at Dock Village in Lansdale. Twelve (12) of the residents of Dock Village attended and participated in a lively discussion.

Again, much thanks to our super presenters: Bruce Hengey of Re/Max Services; Nikki Holcroft of PNC Mortgage Corp.; and Meg Pollisino of the Montgomery County Housing Authority

### Elkins Park Seminar:

In May, the Council held its third seminar of Nina's tenure at the La Mott Community Center in Cheltenham. It was both successful and very well-attended—35 people came!

As usual our presenters did a fabulous job. Thanks go out to: Anne Rubin of Century 21 Advantage Gold; Nikki Holcroft of PNC Mortgage Corp.; Eric Abraham of Kleeman Associates; and Patricia Hankinson of the Department of Housing Services.

Attendees reported that the seminar surpassed their expectations! Applause to Nina and the presenters!

### Norristown Seminar.

Our most recent seminar was held at the end of June at the Norristown Public Library. Again, Nina was met with great success—25 people attend.

We welcomed back some previous speakers and welcomed on some new. Much thanks to: Bruce

Hengey (Re/Max); Jerome Scarpello (Cardinal Financial); Eric Abraham (Kleeman); Henry Sekawungu (Norristown Boro.); Judy Memberg (Genesis Housing); & Patricia Hankinson (MontCo. Housing Services). Nina is working hard to get people informed!!

If you cannot attend one of our seminars, be sure to call the office and Nina will be glad to send you a First Time Homebuyer's Kit. The Kit is loaded with information and it is available free of charge. It includes resource lists and information about:

- r Your right to fair housing opportunities;
- r Credit reports;
- r Home inspections;
- r Homeowner insurance;
- r Mortgages, loans, financial assistance;
- r And much, much more!

**For information about upcoming seminars**

**OR**

**to receive a free First Time Homebuyer's Kit,**

**CALL:**

**FAIR HOUSING COUNCIL OF**



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
215-576-7711**

## *FAIR HOUSING PHOTO GALLERY*

2000 POSTER CONTEST—The participants are from the left: Richard Opperman, President of MontCo. Assoc. of Realtors (judge); Donna Jones, Jenkintown art teacher; Lee Soltysiak, Congressman Hoeffel's office (judge); Denise Hoeksema, Elkins Park School teacher; Alex Stefanatos (Elkins Park winner); Samantha Hobson (Colonial Elementary winner); Connie Brady, Danella Realty (judge); Julia Cooper, overall Countywide winner (Jenkintown Elementary winner).

*FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR:*  
Stephen Gold, Public Interest Law Center of Phila. &  
Mary-Louise Homicki, Council President

*IN OFFICE:* Lily Chun, Assistant Director and  
Renee Langley, Executive Director

## *FAIR HOUSING PHOTO GALLERY*

*ANNUAL MEETING: Mary-Louise Homicki, Council President & Paul Barndt, Jr., realtor/volunteer*

*IN OFFICE: Lily Chun, Assistant Director & Liane Anderson, Education & Outreach Coordinator*

*FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR:  
Pamela Croke & Josie Clark, volunteer*

*ANNUAL MEETING: Raymond Cartwright, Director of Housing, PA Human Relations Commission*

*IN OFFICE:  
Jane Kim & Daniel Sansoni, special research project coordinators*

## UPCOMING EVENTS & THINGS TO DO

### EVENTS

#### December 1–2, 2000

Conference: *Integration*

Works: *Building Open & Thriving Communities*

Location: Penn Tower Hotel  
Philadelphia, PA

Contact: Don DeMarco  
Fund for an OPEN Society  
(215) 482-OPEN

*Fund* is sponsoring this conference to discuss how housing segregation is a threat to our nation and why it is urgently necessary that we create opportunities for open communities. The conference goals are:

- To bring together leaders in integrated and diverse communities to share best practices and ideas for improvement;
- To reach out to people in communities undergoing racial change;
- To involve representatives from government agencies such as HUD and not-for-profits, such as local and regional fair housing organizations, in the discussion of how to build thriving communities where a diverse range of people live;
- To begin a long-term process of increasing public awareness of the social and economic value of integration;
- To strengthen a movement and organization in support of efforts to increase number of stable diverse communities.

### THINGS TO DO

#### National Liberty Museum

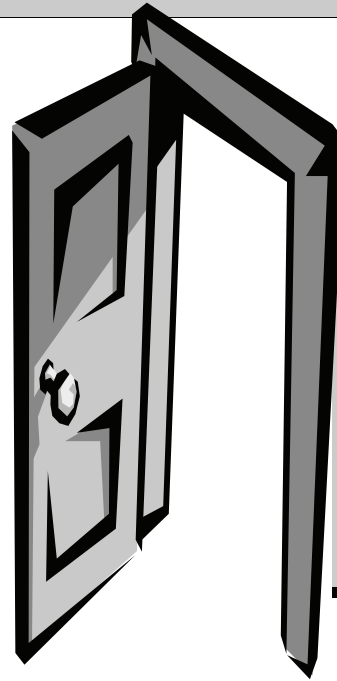
*America's Home for Heroes*  
321 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 925-2800  
[www.libertymuseum.org](http://www.libertymuseum.org)

The National Liberty Museum is a vision realized by Irvin Borowsky, retired businessman, art collector and civic leader. Borowsky founded the museum out of concern over the effects of violence and hatred on people and to remind us that liberty is fragile and must be nurtured.

Borowsky puts forth his message in an unusual way—over 60 pieces of art are deployed throughout the museum illustrating and complementing the textual statements found there. The themes of the museum focus on nonviolence and freedom of speech, assembly, and religion. Heroes are a major theme throughout the three floor museum with its half-dozen galleries.

The museum is interactive, also, where museum-goers can vote on public policy questions, or literally “shred hate and teasing”. Touch-activated computers are set up and a film about the museum is shown on the first floor.

Take a trip to the National Liberty Museum and celebrate our nation's heritage of freedom.



**LET US  
OPEN  
THE  
DOOR  
FOR  
YOU!!!**

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

### *THE NATIONAL HOME MODIFI- CATIONS ACTION COALITION NEWSLETTER*

NHMAC is an association of advocates who believe that every person, regardless of age or level of ability, has a right to accessible, safe, and well-designed housing. NHMAC advocates universal design and greater availability of home modifications and assistive technology to accommodate every individual's needs—a benefit to all society.

The NHMAC newsletter is published four times a year. To receive it contact:  
**Richard Duncan**  
**Center for Universal Design**  
**North Carolina State Univ.**  
**Box 8613**  
**Raleigh, North Carolina**  
[www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/)



New fair housing t-shirts have arrived...and they're great!! Again, we have taken the design from the winning poster of the "April Is Fair Housing Month" Poster Contest and made it into a super t-shirt.

The design, created by Julia Cooper, a 6th grader from the Jenkintown Elementary, contains the slogan "All Are Welcome Here". The t-shirts are gray, cost \$15 and are available in L or XL

**TO PLACE YOUR ORDER,**

**Mail a \$15 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 (Choose style & size)  
WHITE T'S: Red/Orange (\_\_\_Sm) Green/Purple (\_\_\_Sm\_\_\_Med\_\_\_L) Brown/Black (\_\_\_Sm)  
GRAY T'S: Pink/Green (\_\_\_L\_\_\_XL)

*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!**

**MEMBERSHIP RATES:**

- r Individual (\$25)
- r Nonprofit Org. (\$35)
- r Corporate (\$50)

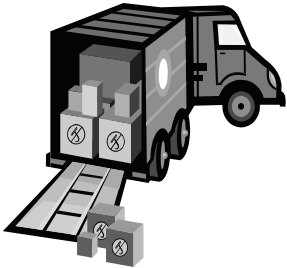


Fair Housing Council of  
Montgomery County  
P.O. Box 578  
Glenside, PA 19038

email: [fairhous@libertynet.org](mailto:fairhous@libertynet.org)

**In This Issue...**

Fair Housing Council Photo Gallery



## Summer is a season for moving.

If you have children and a landlord refuses to rent to you, requires a higher security deposit, limits the use of facilities, or says you can only live in certain areas of a housing complex...that could be discrimination.

If you are disabled, landlords must allow you to make reasonable accommodations to ensure full use of your apartment. Telling you that you can't install grab bars and ramps is against the law.

**IT'S ILLEGAL TO CONSIDER RACE, COLOR, RELIGION,  
SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN, DISABILITY OR FAMILY STATUS  
IN RENTAL, SALES, LENDING OR HOMEOWNER'S INSUR-  
ANCE DECISIONS.**

If you think you have been discriminated against, call us.  
We are here to help.

**CALL: (215) 576-7711**

**Good Luck  
With  
the Move!!!**