



MIAMI VALLEY FAIR HOUSING CENTER NEWSLETTER

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JIM MCCARTHY, PRESIDENT/CEO

Waikiki Party Fundraiser Celebrates 10th Anniversary!

The 10th Anniversary of the Waikiki Party Fundraiser was held on Saturday, August 23 in the Great Hall of Sinclair Community College. Over 200 people attended and were treated to an evening of live music, line dancing, great Hawaiian-themed food and raffle drawing. The band, Premium Blend, performed a "Motown Review" that was enjoyed by everyone in attendance. Thanks to all the corporate sponsors for their generous support and everyone that donated items for the raffle drawing. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!



Miami Valley Fair Housing Center Receives Statewide Award

On July 30, 2014, the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center was awarded the "Community Development Partner of the Year" Award from the Ohio Conference of Community Development (OCCD). The award is given annually in recognition of a non-profit or faith-based organization, individual, business, financial institution, foundation, intermediary, government agency, or other entity that has provided exceptional support to the community development industry.

The 2014 Partner of the Year award was given "to Miami Valley Fair Housing Center who has been a tireless advocate for fair housing in our region and a proactive leader, recognized nationally for actions that make our community stronger." Jim McCarthy and John Zimmerman represented the Fair Housing Center at the Annual Awards Banquet held in Columbus.

In addition, a second 2014 Partner of the Year award was given to Southwest Priority Board Community Development Corporation who OCCD said "exemplifies the power of grassroots community development organization."



Banks and Fannie Mae vendors discriminate against communities of color by failing to maintain and market foreclosures

The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center (MVFHC), the [National Fair Housing Alliance](#) (NFHA), and 16 other NFHA member organizations announced the results of a major undercover investigation into the failure of banks and property preservation companies to maintain and market foreclosed homes in African American and Latino neighborhoods. The investigation of Real Estate Owned (REO) homes in 30 major metropolitan areas found disturbing incidents of discrimination in how these banks and Fannie Mae's preservation management companies fail to secure the doors and windows, mow lawns, fix gutters and downspouts, remove trash and provide other maintenance for REOs in African American and Latino neighborhoods, while providing these services for their REOs located in white neighborhoods.

A report detailing the findings of the investigation, "[ZIP Code Inequality: Discrimination by Banks in the Maintenance of Foreclosed Homes in Neighborhoods of Color](#)," was released September 3, 2014. It details the results of the investigation of more than 2,400 REO properties located in and around 30 major U.S. cities.

"This report and the investigative work behind it shows how these lenders and Fannie Mae continue to destabilize our communities of color, and why there continues to be a story of two economic recoveries—one for affluent, mostly white communities, and one for middle-class communities of color," said Jim McCarthy, MVFHC's President/CEO.

The Fair Housing Act makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability or familial status, as well as the race or national origin of residents of a neighborhood. This law applies to housing and housing-related activities, including the maintenance, appraisal, listing, marketing and selling of homes.

Visit [NFHA's website](#) for the full report.

more photos from the 10th Annual Waikiki Party



HUD confirms that SB 349 sets up conflict in state and federal law

The Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) received confirmation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that the proposed Ohio Senate Bill 349 would throw Ohio law out of kilter with federal law and “jeopardize the [substantial equivalence](#) of the Ohio [fair housing] act.” The shift would force Ohio to forego \$1 million in federal funds for investigation and enforcement of discrimination cases, and it would require both landlords and tenants to use the more expensive and cumbersome federal channels to process discrimination complaints.

SB 349 was introduced by Sen. Seitz (R-Cincinnati) in late June. It has not yet been assigned to a committee, though advocates are actively opposing it on the grounds that it “undermines civil rights and fair housing protections in Ohio,” said Jim McCarthy, MVFHC’s President/CEO.

“It’s in the best interest of all of us to oppose legislation that would make it more difficult to challenge those who would discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, military status and/or familial status,” McCarthy said. “Ohio doesn’t need a law that turns back the clock on discrimination.”

The bill would reduce the consequences of housing discrimination by lowering and capping the punitive damages that guilty landlords would have to pay. It would discourage victims from filing a complaint by making them liable for the attorney’s fees of the party they accuse of discrimination if there is not enough evidence to prove their case. Also, Ohio would lose crucial HUD funds to go after those who violate fair housing laws in Ohio.

Ohio and 37 other states have fair housing laws that are considered “substantially equivalent” to federal law. In her [letter to OCRC](#), Lynn M. Grosso, Director of HUD’s Office of Enforcement, noted that because the bill

conflicts with federal law on several important points, Ohio would lose that designation.

Grosso wrote: “Based on our general review, because SB 349 would exempt owners of single-family homes from prohibited acts, reduce the coverage of single family dwellings under the law, limit and cap the availability of damages and penalties in the administrative process, prohibit damage awards to fair housing agencies and deter aggrieved persons from filing discrimination complaints, enactment of SB 349 presents significant inconsistencies with federal requirements for substantial equivalency and will jeopardize the continued participation and receipt of federal funding by the State through the Fair Housing Assistance Program.”

“This bill is not just bad for tenants, it’s bad for landlords too,” said Bill Faith, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio. “If Ohio were to lose its substantial equivalency it would force the complaint process into the federal arena, where everything is more cumbersome and expensive. It’ll make it harder on everyone.”

Earlier this summer in [a letter to Sen. Seitz](#), OCRC sketched a dark image of housing reality under SB 349: “Touted as a bill to amend damages and fees,” OCRC wrote, “this legislation, if passed, would legally immunize small landlords, allowing them to tell potential renters or buyers, I am not going to [sell] or [rent] my home to you because you are: Black...female...Hispanic...blind...Jewish...a soldier...pregnant. We are certain this was not the drafters’ intent, but it will undoubtedly be the impact.”

For more information about how SB 349 would harm Ohioans, visit [Fight349.org](#).



Come Out To T.G.I. Friday's on October 13 and Support MVFHC

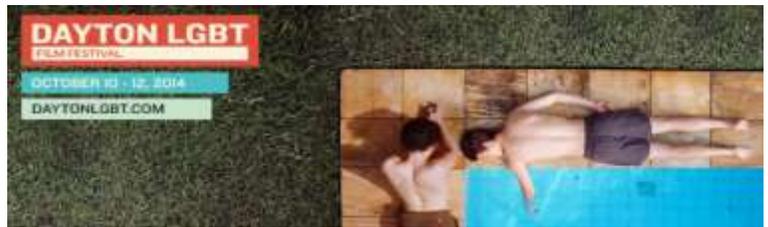
On Monday, October 13th, T.G.I. Friday's near the Dayton Mall will donate 20% of your check to the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center. Stop in for lunch or dinner and bring your friends!



Dayton LGBT Film Festival

The Neon will again host this year's LGBT Film Festival from Friday, October 10th through Sunday, October 12th. The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center is sponsoring the Sunday, 1:00 PM showing of *Out In The Night*.

Out In The Night is a documentary that tells the story of a group of young, African American lesbians who were walking in a gay-friendly part of NYC on a hot August night in 2006. As they walked under the hot neon lights of tattoo parlors in the West Village, an older man sexually and violently confronted them. A fight ensued that was caught by nearby security cameras. Though everyone involved got up and walked away, 911 was called. The women were charged with gang assault and attempted murder, and the media was quick to call them a "Gang of Killer Lesbians."



Mark your calendars for these

UPCOMING EVENTS!

September 26—28

[Oktoberfest at the Dayton Art Institute](#)

October 10—12

[Dayton LGBT Film Festival](#) at The Neon

October 13

MVFHC Fundraiser at T.G.I. Friday's

December 10

MVFHC Annual Meeting

MVFHC Mission Statement

The mission of the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center (MVFHC) is to eliminate housing discrimination and ensure equal housing opportunity for all people in our region.

Specifically, the Miami Valley Fair Housing Center seeks to eliminate housing discrimination against all persons because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, familial status, or any other characteristic protected under state or local laws. In furthering this goal, MVFHC engages in activities designed to encourage fair housing practices through educational efforts; assists person who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination; identifies barriers to fair housing in order to help counteract and eliminate discriminatory housing practices; works with elected and government representatives to protect and improve fair housing laws; and takes all appropriate and necessary action to ensure that fair housing laws are properly and fairly enforced throughout the Miami Valley.

MVFHC Vision Statement

The Miami Valley Fair Housing Center recognizes the importance of "home" as a component of the American dream. We envision a country free of housing discrimination where every individual, group and community enjoys equal housing opportunity and access in a bias-free and open housing market. We envision a country where integrated neighborhoods are the norm, and private and public sectors guarantee civil rights in an open and barrier-free community committed to healing the history of discrimination in America.

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