

# Message From the President

Dear Friends of the Fair Housing Council:

The Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia would like to thank its many individual and corporate supporters who have made the year 2008 activities possible.

In addition special thanks to:

- The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
- Delaware County Office of Housing & Community Development
- Bucks County Department of Community and Business Development
- Chester County Department of Community Development
- The Philadelphia Foundation
- TD Bank Charitable Foundation

April of 2008 marked the 40th year anniversary of the passage of the federal Fair Housing Act, which protects the right of all citizens to have equal access to the housing of their choice regardless of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, or because they have children in their family. Forty years after housing discrimination was outlawed, the Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia (FHCSF) continues to work to ensure that all people are guaranteed an equal right to housing.

FHCSF continually evaluates our effectiveness in addressing this problem. In the past year we significantly expanded our outreach program to educate greater numbers of consumers and housing providers about their fair housing rights and responsibilities. This effort was made possible through funding from the Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development, Bucks County Department of Community and Business Development, Chester County Department of Community Development, The Philadelphia Foundation, and TD Bank Charitable Foundation.

2008 was the final year of a three year performance based contract from HUD to conduct systemic housing investigations in the region. In 2005, FHCSF was one of only 13 groups in the nation HUD determined were entitled to receive performance based funding because of our track record of being a “high performing” fair housing enforcement agency. This year,

FHCSP was again awarded a three year grant to continue our enforcement efforts through 2011.

This year, FHCSP also received a General Operating Support grant from The Philadelphia Foundation (TPF) under their new grant-making strategy to fund high performing organizations that are able to fulfill their missions through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and persistent dedication to achieving results. TPF evaluated FHCSP's leadership, management, adaptive ability, and operational capacity and determined that we are an organization with the capabilities, knowledge, and resources to have a long-term impact on the needs of the Philadelphia region.

For 52 years, FHCSP has been the region's most experienced and effective agency in the struggle to ensure that all people are guaranteed an equal right to housing regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, familial status, or disability. The credit for our success should be given to the dedicated staff who are relentless in their efforts to insure equality in housing.

As President of the Board of Directors, I have been honored to work with the Fair Housing Council's dedicated staff and board members. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, complaints of housing discrimination are at an all time high in the Philadelphia region. We enter 2009 with determination to continue to uncover housing discrimination and to promote fair housing in our communities. We are extremely grateful for the confidence and support of our members and funders that allow us to educate and advocate for equal access to quality, affordable housing for everyone in the Philadelphia region. Thank you.

Christine Joes  
President, Board of Directors

**Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia  
Statement of Activities  
Year Ended December 31, 2007\***

<b>Revenues &amp; Support</b>	
Government Contracts	\$526,374
Litigation Proceeds	\$22,445
Contributions	\$47,337
In-kind Contributions	\$5,500
Other	\$13,908
Total Revenues and Support	\$615,564
<b>Expenses</b>	
Compensation	\$215,082
Conferences	\$4,736
Consultants and Subcontractors	\$214,178
Copying & Printing	\$19,076
Depreciation	\$2,758
Employee Benefits	\$2,449
Employee Travel	\$6,006
Advertising	\$209
In-kind	\$5,500
Insurance	\$511
Memberships, Contrib. & fees	\$3,914
Office Supplies	\$5,758
Payroll Taxes	\$19,326
Postage	\$8,335
Rent & Utilities	\$24,791
Repairs & Maintenance	\$971
Retirement Plan	\$12,626
Telephone	\$5,910
Grant Expense	\$500
Training	\$5,000
Total Expenses	\$557,636
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	\$57,928
<b>Net Assets—January 1, 2007</b>	\$594,158
<b>Net Assets—December 31, 2007</b>	\$652,086

\*This is an audited income statement as of December 31, 2007. The Council's financial records are audited yearly. A final audited Statement of Activities for the year 2008 will be available by July 2009.

In July, 2007, FHCSP filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) against the Chestnut Hill Local, which was then referred to PHRC for investigation. Upon conducting its investigation, PHRC found probable cause in the case to credit FHCSP's allegations of discrimination.

FHCSP and the Chestnut Hill Local newspaper reached a settlement, where the Chestnut Hill Local agreed to reimburse FHCSP for the cost of its investigation. In addition, the Chestnut Hill Local agreed to undergo a fair housing training for its staff members, to publish a commentary on fair housing, publish an equal housing opportunity statement in its classified ad section, and to publish a fair housing advertisement in each edition of the paper for the next ten years.

## Message From the Executive Director

Dear Friends of the Fair Housing Council:

2008 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the signing of the Fair Housing Act. 2008 also marked the Fair Housing Council of Suburban Philadelphia's 52<sup>nd</sup> year of educating and advocating for equal access to quality, affordable housing. Despite passage of the Fair Housing Act 40 years ago, housing discrimination persists in the five-county Greater Philadelphia area (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties, PA), a metropolitan region of over 3.8 Million people with distinct and widespread fair housing needs. Extensive research, as well as the longtime experience of FHCSP and its partners, indicate a unique set of characteristics and practices that impede fair housing goals in region and demonstrate continued need for FHCSP's services. FHCSP received a record number of housing discrimination complaints in 2008.

In its 52-year history, FHCSP has earned a strong national reputation for its leadership efforts to combat discrimination and assure equal housing access for the protected classes. FHCSP is the Philadelphia region's most experienced, seasoned, and effective fair housing agency, and is the only fair housing council in the region with a successful track record of systemic mortgage lending and insurance testing. FHCSP also plays a unique role by focusing significant effort on preventing fair housing violations before they occur through historic focus on outreach and education to housing providers, and by serving as a national resource and technical assistance provider to other fair housing councils.

FHCSP's 2008 accomplishments which are detailed in this report resulted in:

- Reducing the instances of housing discrimination through increased proactive outreach, education and training
- Providing staff, clients and constituents of social service agencies and nonprofit organizations with accurate, understandable and current information about fair housing law in order to recognize and thwart illegal housing discrimination
- Increasing in the awareness of the existence of housing discrimination as a barrier to housing choice
- Empowering minorities, families with children, and person with disabilities to utilize the rights and remedies provided by the Fair Housing Act and FHCSP's enforcement resources to confront and eradicate housing discrimination

Financial support from individuals, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, The Philadelphia Foundation, TD Bank Charitable Foundation, Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development, Bucks County Department of Community and Business Development, and Chester County Department of Community Development provided the resources to carry out FHCSP's 2008 education, compliance and enforcement programs.

The tremendous support staff received from FHCSP's Board of Directors was instrumental in exceeding all of our objectives for 2008. Christine Joes, FHCSP's Board President, was instrumental in maintaining an environment of mutual respect between staff and the board that is a key ingredient to FHCSP's productivity.

James Berry  
Executive Director

to people with children because of the older tenant on the first floor. FHCSP commenced an investigation of the incident, and found that the owners indeed had a policy of not renting to families with children.

On September 27, 2007, FHCSP and Mr. Newmiller filed a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). On January 7, 2008, the parties agreed to a settlement where the owners, Ms. Gehris and Mr. Newsom, paid a total of \$1,500.00 to Mr. Newmiller. In addition, the owners agreed to change their rental policies to allow families with children to live in their property and attended a fair housing training session conducted by FHCSP to ensure compliance with the law in the future.

### **Chestnut Hill Local**

FHCSP also settled an administrative complaint filed against the Chestnut Hill Local newspaper for violating the federal Fair Housing Act and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act. The Chestnut Hill Local is a weekly newspaper that serves the Chestnut Hill section of Philadelphia as well as the surrounding area.

In March, 2007, FHCSP found an instance of discriminatory advertising in the Chestnut Hill Local and began to monitor the newspaper on a regular basis over the period of several months for discriminatory conduct. As a result of this investigation, FHCSP found that the Chestnut Hill Local was discriminating in advertising property rentals. FHCSP observed phrases such as "one person only", "only mature adults need apply" or "ideal for single professional" being printed in the newspaper's classifieds section, indicating a preference for prospective tenants based on their familial status.

add up to more than 141 because some complainants alleged discrimination based on multiple protected classes).

During 2008, FHCSF completed its Fair Housing Organizations Initiative grant from HUD. The purpose of this grant was to build the capacity of Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (CLASI) to provide fair housing services in the state of Delaware. Over the past year, FHCSF has continued to assist CLASI in setting up both a education and outreach program and a testing program. CLASI will continue to provide a variety of fair housing enforcement services in Kent, New Castle, and Sussex Counties through a FY2008 Fair Housing Initiatives Program grant from HUD.

This year, FHCSF also completed the third year of a 3-year Performance Based Funding Initiative grant from HUD. The purpose of this grant is to allow fair housing groups to implement strategic plans and develop long-term systemic investigations.

Finally, in 2008 FHCSF settled the following complaints:

**Barbara Gehris and Howard Newsom**

FHCSF and William Newmiller settled a complaint against Barbara Gehris and Howard Newsom, owners of a Drexel Hill apartment building, for violating the familial status provision of the federal Fair Housing Act and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.

In January, 2007, FHCSF received a call from Mr. Newmiller stating that he had been denied rental at an apartment due to the fact that he has children. Mr. Newmiller saw a “for rent” sign in front of a property in Drexel Hill and called to inquire about the unit. When he stated that he had his two children staying with him every other weekend, he was told that the owners could not rent

## Education Report

During the past year, FHCSF’s education programs were supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Delaware County Office of Housing and Community Development, the Bucks County Department of Community and Business Development, the Chester County Department of Community Development The Philadelphia Foundation, and TD Bank Charitable Foundation.

During 2008, FHCSF staff spoke at 35 educational events, trainings, and meetings and trained 1,841 individuals on their rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. These educational programs and trainings included:

- Delaware County First Time Homebuyers
- Delaware County Fair Housing Task Force
- Chester City Homebuyer Fair
- Delaware County Homebuyer Fair
- Chester County Homebuyer Fair
- Housing Alliance of PA “Homes Within Reach” Conference
- Direct Services Coalition of Bucks County
- Diversified Investment Group
- ReMax of Cherry Hill
- Catholic Social Services
- Chester County Nonprofit Housing Providers
- Delco Property Investors
- Delaware County Apartment Owners Association
- Residential Living Options
- Bucks County Homeless Shelters
- Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Grosse and Quade
- Prime Property Management Company

FHCSF staff also participated in the following local

coalitions and task force meetings:

- Chester Partners in Homeownership
- Delaware County Fair Housing Task Force
- Bucks County Fair Housing Committee
- Don't Borrow Trouble Suburban Philadelphia
- HUD Fair Housing Working Group

This year, FHCSP continued to distribute four educational guides and two informational brochures, including *Fair Housing: It's Your Right*, *A Fair Housing Guide for People With Disabilities*, *A Fair Housing Guide to Homeowners Insurance*, *Non-Discriminatory Rental Practices: A Fair Housing Guide for Landlords and Apartment Management*, *Housing Discrimination Hurts Everyone*, and *Fair Housing is Good Business*. In addition to guides handed out at educational events, almost 6,000 guides were distributed to various organizations and individuals in the region.

In addition, FHCSP's newsletter, the *Delaware Valley Fair Housing News* was sent to over 6,900 government officials, housing advocates, organizations that serve members of protected classes, industry professionals, and other individuals in the five-county region.

FHCSP continued to provide education to real estate agents on how to comply with the Fair Housing Act. FHCSP writes a regular column in the *Realtor® News*, a publication of the Suburban West Realtors® Association. These fair housing articles reach over 4,200 real estate industry professionals in the Delaware Valley.

Finally, in 2008 FHCSP partnered with the Tennessee Fair Housing Council to sponsor the National Fair Housing Advocate Online, the nation's leading resource of fair housing law. The Advocate has been a

project of the Tennessee Fair Housing Council since 1995, and pioneered the use of the internet in fair housing enforcement and education. The Advocate is a searchable database of fair housing information, available to both fair housing advocates as well as the general public. The Advocate provides a wealth of information on fair housing, including news archives, press releases, a case database, information about HUD settlements, job listings, links, and discussion boards. With an average of approximately 10,000 page views per day, the Advocate is a comprehensive and accurate source for fair housing information and an invaluable resource to the community.

To access the National Fair Housing Advocate Online, visit [www.fairhousing.com](http://www.fairhousing.com).

## Enforcement Report

During 2008, FHCSP's enforcement program was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. FHCSP conducted enforcement activities under a Private Enforcement Initiative grant, which allowed FHCSP to continue to conduct testing in response to complaints of discrimination as well as testing random sites for compliance with the Fair Housing Act. In 2008, FHCSP completed 189 testing investigations, monitoring rental, sales, accessibility, and insurance practices throughout the region.

This year, FHCSP received 141 complaints of housing discrimination. Of these, 52 complaints alleged discrimination based on disability, 34 based on race, 42 based on familial status, 11 based on national origin, 5 based on gender, 2 based on religion, 3 based on age, and 8 based on protected classes not covered by the Fair Housing Act or other fair housing related issues (numbers