

Just Suburbs

Spring 2014



PLEASE
DONATE
GENEROUSLY

to Open Communities.
Use the enclosed
envelope to make
a gift.

Awards that honor our legacy

Open Communities establishes an award to honor the legacy of justice champion Jean R. Cleland and expands the scope of the award named for Rayna and Marvin Miller

They were more than fair and affordable housing advocates. They were champions of justice and inclusion. And they believed everyone deserves welcome. They were Rayna and Marvin Miller, and Jean Cleland, three of the original founders of Open Communities. And they have inspired us to identify and celebrate those who search for justice in our own time.

In a continuing effort to celebrate our rich legacy and use it as a catalyst to inspire others, Open Communities recently announced the creation of the Jean R. Cleland Social Action Award, named for the Wilmette social justice leader who died in September 2013 at age 89. **Ellen and Ed McManus**, Wilmette residents and long-time community advocates for affordable housing and accessibility to people with disabilities, will be the first Cleland Award recipients.

We also have expanded the scope of our award named for Rayna and Marvin Miller: from the Housing Justice Award to the Community Justice Award. **Father Robert Oldershaw**, Pastor Emeritus of St. Nicholas Church in Evanston, will be honored as this year's winner of the Rayna and Marvin Miller Community Justice Award, for his leadership in all areas of housing, economic and social justice that manifest as grassroots action for inclusive and diverse north suburban communities.

Both awards signify the organization's transformation in 2012 from one focused exclusively on fair and affordable housing in the northern suburbs to one that promotes positive change by educating, advocating and organizing for economic and social justice as well.

"Jean's entire life was dedicated to justice and inspired by her deep religious faith," said Gail Schechter, Executive Director of Open Communities. "Her credo was, 'From those to whom much is given, much is expected,' and we seek to recognize individuals who continue to carry out that credo by reaching out to their neighbors and making the northern suburbs a place that is welcoming to all, regardless of race, religion or income level."

[Continued on page 2](#)



Rev. Robert Oldershaw, winner of the 2014 Rayna & Marvin Miller Community Justice Award

Check our
website
for the full
stories.

Our Mission

Open Communities' mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities in north suburban Chicago.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS



A Storytelling Event to Celebrate Fair Housing Month

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

6:30 – 8:30pm

Wilmette Public Library

1242 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, IL

Board of Directors

Susan Marie Connor, President
Ann Airey, Vice President
Corrie Wallace, Secretary
Arif Choudhury, Treasurer
Debbie De Palma
Ravi Deva
Liliana Fargo
Nancy Goldberg
Jen McQuet
Loretta Sortino
Sharon Staine

Staff

Gail Schechter
Executive Director
Kerri-Ann Anderson
Foreclosure Prevention Outreach Worker
Jasmine S. Brewer
Director of Housing Counseling
Nancy Burton
Director of Administration
Alicia De La Cruz
Immigrant Integration Project Director
Anna Dominov
Housing Counselor
Jacqueline Grossmann
Homesharing Coordinator
Oliver Jury
Research Associate
Viki Rivkin
Director of Fair Housing
Brendan Saunders
Director of Organizing & Advocacy
Jes Scheinpflug
Outreach Coordinator
Casey Wittekind
Fair Housing Associate

Contact Us

614 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka, IL 60093-2308
Ph: (847) 501-5760 « Fax: (847) 501-5722
E-mail: info@open-communities.org
www.open-communities.org

Acknowledgements

Funds for this publication were provided in part through an award from Suburban Area Agency on Aging under Title III of the Older Americans Act as administered through the Illinois Department on Aging and Federal Administration on Aging. Further, the work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements, and the interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Government.

Non-discrimination

Open Communities does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the U.S. Civil Rights Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Age Discrimination Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois constitutions. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Aging. Call 1-800-252-8966 (voice and TDD) or contact Open Communities.

Join Us!

Along with our expanded mission, we seek to reinforce and create partnerships with organizations and individuals eager to make a positive impact in their communities & those who share our belief that diverse, inclusive and open communities are healthy communities.

Our Members

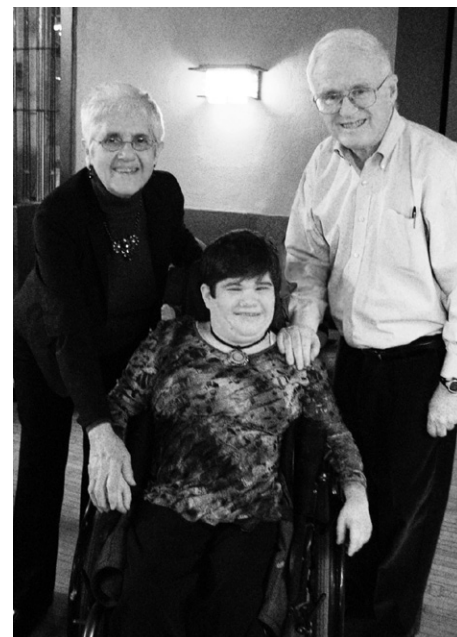
Am Shalom, Glencoe
Baha'is of Wilmette
Beth Emeth the Free Synagogue, Evanston
Beth Hillel Bnai Emenah, Wilmette
Christ United Methodist Church, Deerfield
Church of St. Elisabeth, Glencoe
Community Partners for Affordable Housing
Congregation Bnai Torah, Highland Park
Congregation Bnai Torah, Highland Park
Congregation Hakafa, Glencoe
Congregation Solel, Highland Park
Deerfield Community Relations Commission
First Congregational Church U.C.C., Wilmette
First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette
Glencoe Union Church
Hemenway United Methodist Church, Evanston
Holy Cross Parish, Deerfield
Interfaith Action of Evanston
Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism,
Highland Park
League of Women Voters of Deerfield
League of Women Voters of Glencoe
League of Women Voters of Wilmette
League of Women Voters of
Winnetka-Northfield-Kenilworth
Lutheran Church of Ascension, Northfield

New Foundation Center (formerly WilPower), Northfield
North Shore Village
North Shore Unitarian Church, Deerfield
North Shore United Methodist Church, Glencoe
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, Highland Park
One Deerfield Place, Deerfield
Our Lady of the Brook Parish, Northbrook
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Glenview
Sacred Heart Church, Winnetka
Second Baptist Church, Evanston
Skokie Human Relations Commission
Society of the Divine Word, Techny
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Wilmette
Sts. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish, Winnetka
St. Francis Xavier Church, Wilmette
St. Mary's Parish, Evanston
St. Norbert Church, Northbrook
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Evanston
St. Peter Community Church, Northbrook
St. Philip the Apostle, Northfield
Temple Beth Israel, Skokie
Temple Jeremiah, Northfield
Temple Judea Mizpah, Skokie
Trinity United Church of Christ, Deerfield
Winnetka Congregational Church
Winnetka Presbyterian Church

Awards that honor our legacy Continued from page 1

Ed and Ellen McManus are outstanding examples of drawing from one's own life experiences to better the world for others. As the parents of a daughter who is disabled, they have worked not only on behalf of people with disabilities in housing, small businesses, public accommodations, schools, but also for racially and economically diverse housing, gun control and peace.

Gail added that Fr. Oldershaw "walks the walk instead of merely talking the talk, welcoming Latino residents throughout the northern suburbs to his community and encouraging his parishioners in support of myriad human rights campaigns." In 2004, he said to a gathering of fellow clergy at an Open Communities forum, "We need to multiply ourselves – entrust and trust those within our communities to be heralds of justice, advocates for affordable housing. We should not answer as much as we question – calling the question for our folks who live very comfortably and securely. They and we need to be troubled by those who don't."



Ed and Ellen McManus, winners of the 2014 Jean R. Cleland Social Action Award, with their daughter Laura.

Open Communities catalyzes “Wilmette Cares”



Wilmette Cares advocates include (left to right) Ann Jonaitis, Betty Phillips, Lorelei McClure, Gail Schechter, Lisa Braganca, and Puran Stevens

Open Communities is proud to have played a part in helping to launch one of the northern suburbs’ most exciting new social justice organizations: Wilmette Cares. Founded in 2013 following a gathering of Wilmette residents organized by Open Communities, Wilmette Cares is comprised of residents who advocate for affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing in the village.

“We love Wilmette and want to inspire our neighbors to embrace a spirit of fairness, empathy, and inclusion,” proclaims the group, which invites all to visit www.wilmettecares.org.

Wilmette Cares is an example of grassroots initiatives that Open Communities has supported or organized over the decades, such as Mixed Use for Mallinckrodt, United We Learn, Winnetka Is Neighborly, RELATE (Religious Leaders Acting Together for Equality), and the Wilmette Coalition for Group Homes. We provide expertise and support, free of charge, to north suburban residents concerned with justice issues in their communities – helping them to turn their passion for creating inclusive communities into concrete and productive action. These grassroots actions are both inspired by, and an embodiment of, the Welcome Movement at Open Communities.

Wilmette Cares’ founding was initially inspired by the desire to see affordable housing on Green Bay Road, right by the Metra Station.

But when the Village of Wilmette announced last fall that it would be ending its Village’s 35-year-old Housing Assistance Program (HAP), the group was by then in a strong position to push back. HAP was launched in 1979 to help very low-income seniors – renters and homeowners alike – keep their homes.

Today, the Program’s budget is \$45,000, just 0.13% of the Village’s budget, and helps 21 long-time seniors and people with permanent disabilities stay housed. Wilmette Cares and Open Communities have been urging the Village to continue to fully fund this important safety net for all residents.

Working with Northwestern University civic engagement students, Wilmette Cares is organizing a public forum on inclusive housing in Wilmette on Sunday, May 4th, from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at Mallinckrodt Center, 1041 Ridge – a building which includes affordable housing. All are welcome. For more information, visit www.wilmettecares.org.

If you or members want to organize like Wilmette Cares, contact our team today!

Service, Compassion & Social Justice

Meet Oliver Jury, AmeriCorps VISTA member



In the spirit of our Welcome Movement and expansion of Open Communities, Oliver joined Open Communities last June as the AmeriCorps VISTA* Research Associate. After graduating cum laude from the University of New Mexico with his B.A. in History and Political Science, he relocated to Chicago to begin his year

of service. “I chose Open Communities because it stands for equal opportunity while creating a welcome place for anyone to call home.”

Leading Open Communities’ field work on a National Fair Housing Alliance investigation of the maintenance of vacant, foreclosed bank-owned properties, he has uncovered disparities based on the racial makeup of the neighborhood. He has also quantified the positive outcomes to individuals and communities of Open Communities’ Foreclosure Prevention, Homesharing, and Landlord/Tenant Programs.

“I was surprised by how much work is done by organizations like Open Communities without any fanfare or press. Open Communities is always bustling. It seems before one issue is resolved, there is always a queue for more assistance, more advocacy, or more advice. As a newcomer, it was overwhelming.” We thank Oliver for his energy, intelligence, and spirit!

* *The Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) program was founded in 1965 as a national service program fighting poverty in America.*



What’s happening here? We need you!

If you see a vacant or abandoned home, call us! Perhaps someone lives there who needs help. Or perhaps it is owned by an absentee bank who doesn’t care about your block like you do. Call us at (847) 501-5760. Open Communities is **your** good neighbor.

GET INVOLVED!

Join Open Communities. Know that you are an ambassador of welcome in the northern suburbs. A regular individual membership is \$75 or \$10 for students and low-income persons.

Become a Fair Housing Tester and earn a modest stipend while providing a valuable service. This is one way we investigate housing discrimination.

Join our Organizing and Advocacy committee or our Membership and Outreach committee. Contact Brendan Saunders for more details: brendan@open-communities.org

Join our board. We are looking for board members. Inquiries may be sent to Gail Schechter.

Volunteer technology skills. We are looking not only for housing testers but also someone to assist in organizing our database. High school students welcome.

Contact Gail at 847.501.5760 or gail@open-communities.org if you're interested in volunteering or interning with any of our programs.

Send your photo! Our movement "We Are the North Shore" aims to highlight our diversity. Send your photo holding a sign saying "I am the North Shore" and a typed blurb of who you are to wearetheNS@gmail.com and posted on <http://wearethenorthshore.tumblr.com>



614 Lincoln Avenue
Winnetka, Illinois 60093-2331

E-Newsletter Signup

Get news faster and help us save on postage costs by signing up to receive the newsletter and announcements by email. Go to open-communities.org to sign up.



Follow Open Communities on Facebook and Twitter

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Winnetka, IL 60093
Permit No. 88

Say YES! Benefit

Tuesday, June 10, 2014
6:30 -9:30 pm

The Woman's Club of Evanston
1702 Chicago Avenue

Proceeds benefit Open Communities work for inclusive and diverse Northern Suburbs
For sponsorship and ticket information: www.open-communities.org or call 847-501-5760

HONORING

Reverend Robert H. Oldershaw, Rayna & Marvin Miller Community Justice Award
Ellen and Ed McManus, Jean R. Cleland Social Action Award



FIRST BANK & TRUST

First Bank of Highland Park

Experience. The Difference.

BMO  Harris Bank

NORTH SHORE
COMMUNITY BANK
& TRUST COMPANY
A WINTRUST COMMUNITY BANK

