

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free screening of “Coloring” followed by diversity discussion 11th annual family-friendly Fair Housing Month event April 27 to feature film exploring what it is like to grow up a person of color in a majority white suburb

Winnetka, IL, April 23, 2015 — In honor of Fair Housing Month, Open Communities will present *Coloring*, a short film by Northbrook filmmaker, storyteller and stand-up comic Arif Choudhury, followed by a conversation with the audience about diversity and acceptance in our neighborhoods. The event, to be held Monday evening, April 27 at the Skokie Public Library, is free and open to the public.

Told from the perspective of a child of color in a mostly white suburb, Choudhury’s story highlights the importance of a culture of inclusion. Norms and expectations are as important in influencing the racial diversity of a community as the enforcement of fair housing laws, especially in racially homogeneous areas. The film emphasizes that families and teachers are essential in promoting a culture of self-expression within a welcoming community.

The film will be introduced by its producer Vincent Singleton of Columbia College, with the discussion led by Skokie resident Donna Parker, family liaison to the African American, Black, and Caribbean community for Niles Township School District 219. Members of Choudhury’s family, including his mother Nafisa, who served on the Northbrook Community Relations Commission, will reflect on the film as well.

According to Choudhury, *Coloring* is “based on my childhood growing up in one of the few Bangladeshi-Muslim immigrant families in north suburban Chicago.” Focusing on issues of ethnic and religious identity, assimilation, multiculturalism, and diversity, Choudhury’s stories provide uncommon perspective on the experiences of those too often labeled “the other.”

John Meade of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will also brief the audience on the current state of fair housing and equal opportunity. What issues and patterns do we still see in 2015?

This year marks the 47th anniversary of the federal Fair Housing Act, which Congress passed in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination. Fair Housing Month 2015 resolutions will be displayed at the event from the following localities: Deerfield; Highland Park; Skokie; Wilmette; Niles Township; and the Cook County Commission, which was submitted by Commissioner Larry Suffredin.

The Skokie Public Library is located at 5125 Oakton St in Skokie; the [event](#) will be held from 7pm to 9pm.

About Open Communities

Founded by local activists in 1972, Open Communities’ mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities in north suburban Chicago. Its membership includes residents, congregations and civic organizations. A not-for-profit organization, its free and confidential services include investigating fair housing discrimination and landlord/tenant complaints, foreclosure/predatory lending counseling and prevention, Homesharing, immigrant leadership development, fair housing education and affordable housing advocacy, and grassroots organizing. Formerly known as The Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs, Open Communities expanded its mission and changed its name in 2012.

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