

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Village of Skokie Endorses *Principles of the Welcoming Community*

*Trustees Join North Suburban Civic Leaders Signing on in Support of The Justice Project.
50 Years After Historic MLK Speech, Communities Renew Commitment to Social Justice.*

Winnetka, IL, July 9, 2015 – The Village of Skokie on Monday became the first municipality to endorse *The Justice Project: The March Continues* and its Principles of the Welcoming Community, joining a growing number of elected officials at the federal, state and local level. “We salute these community leaders for endorsing the Principles of the Welcoming Community, which signals their intention to make inclusion the hallmark of the cities and villages of Chicago’s North Shore and beyond,” said Dr. Liliana Fargo, President of Open Communities’ Board of Directors and a Skokie resident.

The Principles set out parameters by which each participating suburb can evaluate itself and by which residents can hold their communities accountable. The hallmarks of the Welcoming Community are justice for all and an inclusive culture that upholds the rights of all residents, home seekers, employees, and visitors. In the Welcoming Community, all are treated equally regardless of income, race, sex, religion, national origin, presence of children, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other legally protected class.

Elected officials endorsing the project to date are: Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, State Representative Laura Fine, State Representative Robyn Gabel, State Senator Daniel Biss, Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl, and Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering.

At Monday evening’s Village Board meeting, Frances Roehm, Skokie resident and member of the Justice Project organizing team, presented the *2015 Justice Project’s* Principles of the Welcoming Community, earning a unanimous vote from the trustees after Trustee Randy Roberts’ motion.

"On behalf of the Skokie Village Board, I congratulate Open Communities on its renewed focus on social justice," said Mayor George Van Dusen. "The Village of Skokie has long championed social justice, diversity, acceptance and harmony, and my colleagues and I are pleased to support the 2015 Justice Project."

"I am very proud to support the Justice Project. This is always a work in progress and I am proud of our efforts in Skokie. There is always more to do and these aspirational Principles fit perfectly with what we stand for," said Skokie Village Board Trustee Roberts, who serves as the Village of Skokie's liaison to the Justice Project.

In addition to political leaders, more than [65 area organizations](#) have joined *The Justice Project: The March Continues* as partners.

The Justice Project: The March Continues is a grassroots movement that aims to inspire north suburban residents to shape their suburbs into more welcoming communities, and give them a framework for doing so by putting in place policies that encourage inclusion. Open Communities will launch the project on Sunday, July 26, with a celebratory event marking the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's address to more than 10,000 people on the Winnetka Village Green. 2015 Justice Day will honor North Shore veterans of the civil rights movement, including those who joined Dr. King on the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery. Among the honorees is Mayor Van Dusen's spouse, Susan, who at age 19 was among the marchers.

Hilary Shelton, Washington Bureau Director for the NAACP, will be the keynote speaker. He and other speakers will address social justice issues such as labor, housing, disability, and immigrant rights, racial and gender equality, and environment and education justice.

2015 Justice Day will be held from 2 to 5pm on the Village Green in Winnetka, and is free and open to people of all ages. The afternoon's activities will include art projects for children and gospel and folk music. More information about the event is available at www.justiceprojectcontinues.org or by phone at 847-501-5760.

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About 2015 Justice Project: The March Continues

The Justice Project: The March Continues is a grassroots social justice movement to inspire the communities in the northern suburbs of Chicago and beyond to be welcoming, inclusive and diverse, and to offer them a framework for doing so.

About Open Communities

Open Communities, formerly the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 whose mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities in north suburban Chicago. The agency works with current and prospective residents and local groups to promote economically and culturally diverse communities in north suburban Chicago. Its services include the investigation of fair housing discrimination and landlord/tenant complaints, foreclosure and predatory lending counseling and prevention, Homesharing, immigrant leadership development, education justice, fair housing education and advocacy, and grassroots organizing.