

JUST HOUSING

Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs Spring 2003

A Salute to Jean Cleland

Wilmette resident **Jean Cleland** was honored at Interfaith's annual meeting last October. Interfaith board member and Evanston resident **Alisú Schoua-Glusberg** presented Cleland with an award acknowledging her thirty years of dedicated service to the organization.

A fair housing advocate since before the 1965 North Shore Summer Project, Cleland helped to found the Interfaith Housing Center in 1972 and subsequently served on the board for most of its history. Cleland's powerful vision of Interfaith continually propelled the agency to remain true to its principles, calling it "a test of our integrity."

Interfaith executive director Gail Schechter praised Cleland for her commitment and hard work on behalf of fair and affordable housing in the northern suburbs. "I have rarely met a person with more integrity, clarity of vision, and broadmindedness than Jean Cleland," she said.

Humbly deflecting the praise, Cleland later complimented the "dedication and skills" of Interfaith's staff. She added, "I know you work long hours, in situations that are not always easy or supportive. But you carry on with your commitment to housing availability and justice."

Reflecting on Cleland's role as a consistent advocate for affordable housing in the northern suburbs, Schechter reminisced: "I will never forget sitting with Jean and some of the 160 long-time residents of the Admiral Oasis Motel in Morton Grove to strategize after the Village had condemned the building. Jean's efforts were instrumental in facilitating a special public meeting at which the residents and the Village



Today, courageous people like Jean Cleland are needed more than ever to open doors in the northern suburbs.

Board were finally able to communicate with one another."

Years ago, as chair of the Wilmette Housing Commission, Cleland led the community in overcoming opposition to the creation of three low-income senior buildings in Wilmette. More recently, she has been an active proponent of affordable housing for families as well as seniors at Mallinckrodt.

Cleland's inspirational commitment to racial and economic justice has never flagged. Today, courageous people like Jean Cleland are needed more than ever to open doors in the northern suburbs. ■

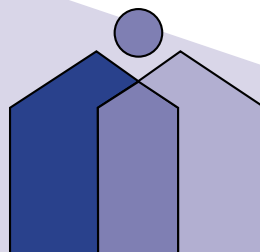
Local Clergy Deplore Hatred

Interfaith is grateful for the community support expressed in the following letter which appeared in the March 6th edition of the Winnetka Talk. Similar letters of support from the Southeast Lake County Clergy Association and the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs were also published in the local press.

As spiritual leaders of congregations in Winnetka, we deplore the blatant racism, threats and intimidation, and hatred that were displayed in a recent anonymous letter to the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs in response to their working for racial, ethnic, and

Continued on page 2

The mission of the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs is to work with others to assure a housing market open to people of all ages and income levels, regardless of race, religion, family composition or any of the other legally protected classes.



Jan Schakowsky Helps Celebrate Interfaith's 30th Anniversary

At the Interfaith Housing Center's annual meeting last October, more than sixty-five people gathered to mark the organization's thirtieth anniversary. The featured speaker, U.S. Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** (D-9), addressed the group at Am Shalom in Glencoe, the site where Interfaith was founded in 1972.

Schakowsky iterated her strong commitment to strengthening and expanding federal fair and affordable housing legislation, as well as anti-predatory lending measures. She is one of the lead sponsors of H.R. 1102 which would establish a National Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Rev. Heather VanDeventer, assistant rector of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Wilmette, presented Schakowsky with a petition entitled "We Want Affordable Housing in Every North Suburban Community." Signed by more than 800 north suburban residents, the document calls on north suburban municipalities to create affordable housing plans. It was accompanied by a similar petition from north suburban clergy.

In accepting the petitions, Schakowsky stated, "It's a matter of political will." To put things in perspective, she noted that the funds authorized by Congress to bail out the airlines after 9/11 could have eliminated homelessness in this nation.

Also at the annual meeting, retiring board member **Jean Cleland** received an award in recognition of her many years of service to Interfaith (see related story). **Marvin Miller** (whose late wife **Rayna** was founding director of Interfaith), **David James** (long-time Interfaith board member), and **Mary Sample** (long-time Interfaith supporter and former staff person) reflected on the organization's thirty-year history and record of accomplishments. ■



Local Clergy Deplore Hatred *Continued from page 1.*

economic diversity on the North Shore.

We affirm the work of the FBI hate crimes division and the Winnetka Police Department in their attempts to bring to justice those who have made such threats. Our faith traditions affirm the values of a diverse community and reveal the importance of caring for the most vulnerable among us, the stranger, the poor, the disabled, and the oppressed.

Our traditions also advance an understanding of justice that promotes laws and policies that should order a community according to precepts of love of neighbor. Preserving and expanding affordable housing for the most vulnerable among us is an expression of this love and justice.

We affirm our historical connections with the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs and their work to ensure that there is fair housing on the North Shore.

With hope and faith,

Rev. Joseph Shank,
Rev. Allen Mothershed,
Rev. Chris Gilmore,
Winnetka Congregational Church

Rev. Edward Prevost,
Rev. Patricia Snickenberger,
Rev. Lane Hensley,
Christ Church, Winnetka

Rev. Kevin Spiess,
Saints Faith, Hope and Charity Church

Rabbi Paul F. Cohen,
Temple Jeremiah

Rev. Martha Page Greene,
Winnetka Presbyterian Church ■



Housing Bills Advance in Illinois

Source of Income Amendment, Illinois Human Rights Act

Interfaith Housing Center executive director Gail Schechter and Evanston activist **Betty Sue Ester** testified on March 11 before the new Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committee of the state legislature in favor of adding “source of income” to the Illinois Human Rights Act (HB 1352).

Passage of this amendment would effectively prevent landlords from turning away applicants solely because of their lawful source of income (e.g., social security, Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers, etc.), just as owners currently cannot refuse to rent or sell housing solely because of an applicant’s race or presence of children.

For her testimony on HB 1352, Schechter played part of a 1965 taped sermon by Rabbi Lippis of North

Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park. The religious leader commented that Illinois made history by passing a fair housing act in the early 1960’s, and he dismissed arguments against the Act about “forced selling to Negroes.” Schechter noted that similar arguments are often resurrected today when landlords mistakenly believe that passage of HB 1352 would force them to rent to voucher holders.

The taped speech had a dramatic effect on the legislative committee. Several of the bill’s proponents, including sponsor Rep. Karen Yarbrough (D-7), agreed that they did not want to look back forty years from now and know they did the wrong thing. As of press time, HB 1352 had passed the committee and was proceeding to the full House.

Find out about the current status of Illinois housing bills on www.juliehamos.org.

Illinois Residential Renters Rights & Responsibilities Act

In addition to HB 1352, Interfaith joined with the Chicago-based Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) to advocate for passage of the Illinois Residential Renters Rights and Responsibilities Act (HB 3067). If passed, Illinois would join twenty-five other states which have landlord/tenant ordinances regulating issues such as security deposits, eviction procedures, and a tenant’s right to organize. Special thanks to Interfaith volunteer and north suburban activist **Carlos Sanchez** who, in partnership with MTO, was responsible for helping to secure State Rep. Willie Delgado (D-Chicago) as chief sponsor of HB 3067. As of press time, the bill had been assigned to a subcommittee for subject matter hearings this summer on landlord/tenant issues. ■

Northern Suburbs Lead Illinois Housing Advocacy

For the first time in Illinois history, the state House of Representatives has a committee devoted to issues of affordable housing. State Rep. Julie Hamos (D-18) is the chairperson of the newly created Housing and Urban Development Committee. “We will work with the new governor to create a comprehensive housing plan for the next five years,” announced Hamos. “Even with a tight budget, the state can better leverage existing resources to develop housing for the people who need it the most.”

Newly-elected north suburban State Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D-57) also serves on the new committee. State Rep. Beth Coulson (R-17) is a co-sponsor of several statewide housing

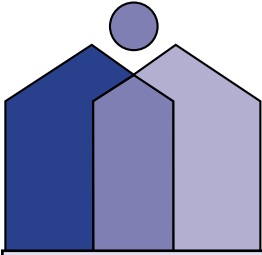
bills and also serves locally on the advisory committee of a proposed Glenview senior development. In recognition of Illinois Affordable Housing Week (March 9-15, 2003), State Rep. Karen May (D-60) declared, “The right to affordable, safe and secure housing is one that should be available to everyone.”

Seven communities in the northern suburbs — Evanston Township, Highland Park, Highwood, Morton Grove, Park Ridge, Skokie, and Wilmette — each adopted local resolutions proclaiming affordable housing week in their communities and promoting activities aimed at providing or advocating for accessible, affordable housing. ■

May 6 in Springfield

Come to the Housing Justice Rally and Lobby Day in Springfield on May 6, Noon to 3:30 p.m.

The housing advocacy community will hold a rally and lobby day in Springfield on Tuesday, May 6, two weeks prior to the deadline for bills to be voted on. Interfaith supporters are encouraged to participate! For more information, please contact Gail Schechter at (847) 501-5760.



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E-mail: ihcns@interfaithhousingcenter.org
Web: www.interfaithhousingcenter.org

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Michele Rodriguez, *Fair Housing Coordinator*

Member Congregations

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Baha'is of Glencoe
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Baha'is of Wilmette
Baha'is of Winnetka
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Church of St. Elisabeth, Glencoe
Community Church of Wilmette
Congregation Hakafa, Glencoe
Congregation Solel, Highland Park
First Congregational Church U.C.C., Wilmette
First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette
Lake Street Church, Evanston
Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism,
Highland Park
Lutheran Church of Ascension, Northfield
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Evanston
North Shore Unitarian Church
North Shore United Methodist Church, Glencoe
North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, Highland Park
Northfield Community Church
Our Lady of the Brook Parish Family, Northbrook

Sacred Heart Church, Winnetka
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, Wilmette
Sts. Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish, Winnetka
St. Francis Xavier Church, Wilmette
St. Joan of Arc Church, Evanston
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wilmette
St. Joseph's Church, Wilmette
St. Nicholas, Evanston
St. Norbert Church, Northbrook
St. Philip the Apostle, Northfield
St. Peter United Church of Christ, Northbrook
Temple Beth Israel, Skokie
Temple Jeremiah, Northfield
Trinity United Church of Christ, Deerfield
Winnetka Congregational Church
Winnetka Presbyterian Church

Member Organizations

Church Women United of Wilmette
Deerfield Human Relations Commission
Evanston Human Relations Commission
Highland Park Housing Commission
Highland Park Human Relations Commission
League of Women Voters of Glencoe
League of Women Voters of Wilmette
League of Women Voters of Winnetka-
Northfield-Kenilworth
North Shore Senior Center
Northbrook Community Relations Commission
Protestants for the Common Good
Skokie Human Relations Commission
Wilmette Community Relations Commission
Wilmette Housing Commission
WilPower, Northfield

Individual Contributors

In addition to financial support from our member congregations and organizations, Interfaith Housing Center also relies on donations from individuals to fund our programs. We extend a sincere thanks to all our donors and members. Additional contributions are always welcome and can be made using the enclosed reply envelope.

Newsletter designer –
Estelle Carol, www.estellegraphics.com

Thanks to Interfaith, Evanston Woman Avoids Foreclosure

Predatory lending practices have been on the rise within the last ten years, accounting for 40% of all foreclosures in 1999. Predatory lenders target unsuspecting, low-income borrowers by charging exorbitantly high interest rate, fees and commissions, misrepresenting the mortgage terms and engaging in other unfair and deceptive practices.

Although Illinois is one of several states that have outlawed predatory lending practices, the laws are only effective if homeowners understand their rights and know where they can go for help.

Fortunately, north suburban residents have a valuable resource in the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs. Recently, Evanston resident Amelia Smith fell victim to an unscrupulous lender. She had refinanced her home, but several months later, fell behind in her mortgage pay-

ments. Her lender promptly threatened foreclosure and gave her one week to come up with \$8,000 in back payments and penalties. Fearing she would lose the home she had lived in for thirty years, she contacted the Interfaith Housing Center in desperate search of help.

"The ability to move quickly is critical in predatory lending situa-

Fearing she would lose the home she had lived in for thirty years, she contacted the Interfaith Housing Center in desperate search of help.

tions," says Michele Rodriguez, Interfaith's fair housing coordinator. Rodriguez was able to meet with Smith within hours of her phone call and had attorneys and bankers review her mortgage documents the very next day. When it became apparent that Smith's broker and lender had engaged in various predatory lending practices, Interfaith brought in an attorney to help Mrs. Smith get her loan rescinded.

With the assistance of the Interfaith Housing Center, Smith avoided foreclosure and was able to refinance her loan with a credible lender. She now has a reversible mortgage, and therefore the \$1,200 she used to put toward her monthly mortgage payment can now be used for other important needs. "If it wasn't for [Interfaith], I don't know what I would have done," Smith says gratefully. "God bless you!" ■

Wanted: Fair Housing Testers

Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs will conduct two training sessions for individuals who wish to investigate fair housing complaints in the northern suburbs. Testers receive a stipend and reimbursement of travel expenses.

Two training sessions are being offered this spring. Interested individuals may choose to attend on Wednesday, April 23rd from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or Saturday, April 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

For more information or to register for the training, contact Michele Rodriguez at (847) 501-5768, ext. 404. ■



Volunteer Opportunities

Get Involved with Interfaith!

- Be a fair housing tester. Testers receive training and a modest stipend for posing as home or apartment seekers.
- Volunteer time in our office. We often need help with mailings, phone calls, etc.
- Invite an Interfaith board member or staff to speak to your organization or congregation. Or send a delegate to one of our monthly board meetings.

Call Interfaith at (847) 501-5760 for more information.

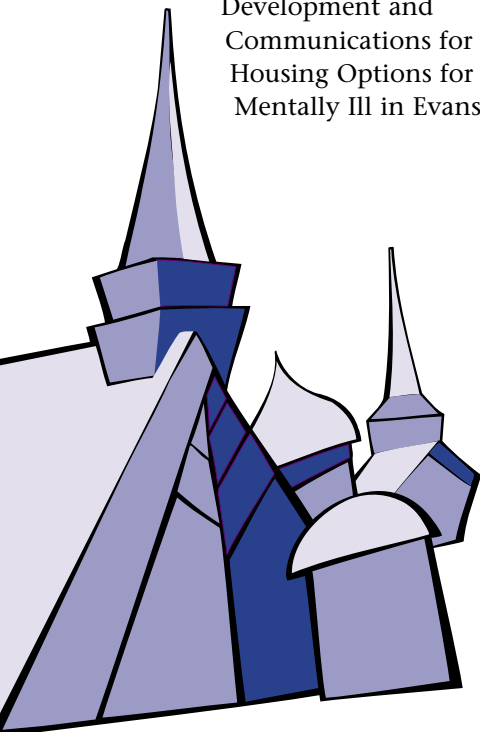
Interfaith welcomes three **new board members**, all passionate civil rights advocates. **Saralynne Crittenden**, a Glenview resident, is an on-air fundraiser for WTTW, singer, and member of Unity Church in Oak Park. **Gabriel Nagy**, a Northbrook resident and St. Norbert's parishioner, is an urban development consultant and former Vice Minister of Housing in Colombia, South America. Gabriel spent the last three months of 2002 in Afghanistan as part of a UN-HABITAT mission to rebuild the country. **Katie Seigenthaler**, Winnetka resident and Sacred Heart parishioner, is a former reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*.



Endita Kiarie, social worker with Evanston/Skokie Valley Senior Services, left the board last October, and **Jean Cleland's** term on the board ended.



Interfaith also welcomes new staff member **Carolyn Coglianes** as Development Officer. Carolyn was previous employed as Director of Development and Communications for Housing Options for the Mentally Ill in Evanston.



Interfaith staff members hold a variety of local, regional, and statewide leadership positions. **Jackie Grossmann** is co-chair of the Niles Township Interagency Network, co-chair of the Illinois Shared Housing Network, board member of the North Shore Service Council, and on the planning committee of Evanston's annual Aging Well conference. **Michele Rodriguez** is secretary of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance. **Sue Carlson** is secretary of the Social Service Council of the Glenview Values Project. **Gail Schechter** serves on the board of the Statewide Housing Action Coalition.



Two congregations have become members of Interfaith: **St. Philip the Apostle** in Northfield and **St. Joan of Arc** in Skokie.

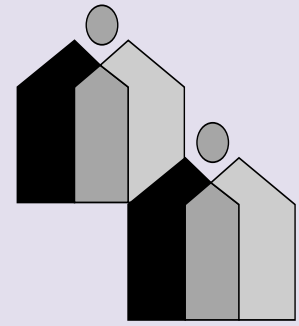


In honor of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s** birthday, Interfaith ran its fifth annual **signature ad** in the Pioneer Press. Nineteen financial and real estate companies publicly re-committed themselves to fair housing goals.



"Just Stories", a weekend **interfaith festival** of engaging, interactive daytime workshops and evening storytelling concerts designed to **promote peace, justice and interracial understanding** in communities, will take place **May 16, 17, and 18** at Divine Word International, 2001 Waukegan Road, Techny, near Northbrook. Educators and justice activists high school age or older are especially encouraged to attend.

For more information, please call (847) 869-4081 or visit www.racebridges.net/juststories.



Acknowledgment

Funds for this publication were provided in part through an award from the Suburban Area Agency on Aging and through grants from the Illinois Department on Aging and/or Administration on Aging and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under Title III of the Older Americans Act.

The Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs 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 the Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs at (847) 501-5760.

Creating Community, One Match at a Time

Thank you for your help. Living here has been a blessing for me!" These are the words of a 55-year-old woman who is benefiting from Interfaith Housing Center's Homesharing program.

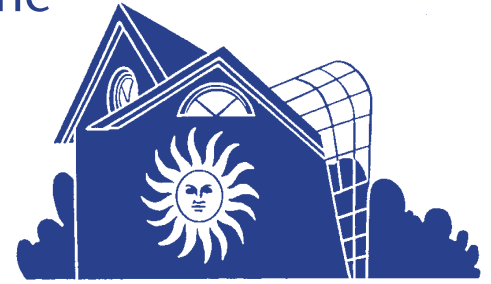
Homesharing is a program that changes lives. Like old fashioned matchmakers, Interfaith introduces people who want to maintain independence to folks who need housing they can afford. In most cases, the matches created are a "win-win," with both parties gaining from the new relationship.

Anna, the woman quoted above, had been battling multiple sclerosis when she contacted Interfaith. She was determined to remain independent in her apartment for as long as possible, but she needed help getting dressed. She also wished she could have someone in her house at night for reassurance. Interfaith was able to match her with Margaret, a 60-year-

old woman who works as a nursing assistant but cannot afford a market rate apartment. In exchange for \$200 in rent, Margaret lives in a room in Anna's house. She helps her get dressed in the morning and keeps her company in the evening.

Often it is the adult children of the frail and elderly who contact Interfaith, concerned about their parents who insist on remaining independent at home. Not long ago, Interfaith matched an 80-year-old woman who needed a daily medication reminder with a 45-year-old man who teaches at a local school. He helps her with her medicine in exchange for a room costing \$350 per month.

In cases like this, a Homesharing match provides the "eyes and ears" that can calm adult children's fears and help assure their parents' continued independence. ■



Contact Homesharing

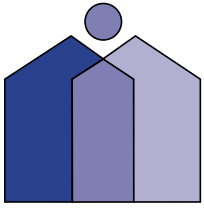
Are you, or is someone you know, looking for companionship, help with expenses or assistance with household chores? Homesharing may be the answer. For more information about Interfaith's Homesharing program, contact Jackie or Sue at **(847) 501-5732, ext.401.**

Affordable Housing Pushed for Mallinckrodt Building



Thanks to the advocacy efforts of affordable housing activists like **Rev. Heather VanDeventer** (left) of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church and Wilmette resident **Mimi Ryan**, the historic Mallinckrodt building in Wilmette is one step closer to housing low-income seniors.

Reverend VanDeventer, Ryan, and more than a dozen other residents founded Mixed Use for Mallinckrodt (MUM) in October 2001 when Loyola University announced it would sell the 17-acre campus. MUM members, together with other grassroots environmental and historic preservation activists, played a key role in gaining the passage of a local referendum that allowed the Wilmette Park District — rather than a private luxury housing developer—to purchase the property. Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs was instrumental in forming MUM, and both groups are continuing to urge the Wilmette Village Board to increase the percentage of affordable housing at Mallinckrodt.



Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs

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Wednesday, April 23, 6–8 p.m.
Saturday, April 26, 9–11 a.m.*

Fair Housing Testers

*For more information
or to register contact
Michele Rodriguez
at (847) 501-5768, ext. 404.
(see page 5)*

A Rabbi Reflects on his Commitment to Interfaith

by Rabbi Isaac Serotta (Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism, Highland Park)

I have no expertise in the intricate laws related to fair housing. Nor do I have any particular ability in building or maintaining a house beyond the most rudimentary repairs. I do not think of myself as a revolutionary out to change the world. Yet, when I was asked to join the board of the Interfaith Housing Center, I quickly agreed. I am proud to contribute whatever skills I have to the organization because I believe its work is so important.

My religion teaches that we should pursue justice. Justice doesn't happen; it must be pursued. Interfaith's mission—to create home-sharing opportunities, to advocate for the creation of affordable housing with communities and developers, and to seek justice for those unfairly denied housing because of their skin color, nationality or religion—is the pursuit of justice in action.

In many of Chicago's northern suburbs, teachers, police officers, and clergy cannot afford to pay the price for housing. Interfaith works to make it possible for people of different ethnic backgrounds, religions and walks of life to live close to their jobs and to each other.

The great Rabbi Hillel, thousands of years ago, said, "Do not separate yourself from the community." The Jewish tradition commands us to make peace where there is strife, starting in our own homes and communities. The opportunity for peace comes only when people of different beliefs have a place to come together for dialogue. Community is the place where we can meet for a parade, a block party, or a town hall gathering and speak our minds and our hearts. But community does not just happen either. We have to work to create the kind of community we want. That is

another reason why I am committed to Interfaith.

Interfaith works to make the North Shore a better place to live. By advocating for fair and affordable housing, we work for justice, for community, for peace. It is an honor to be a member of Interfaith's board and to join in that mission. I invite you to get involved and be a part of our mission, too. ■

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