

PRESS RELEASE



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Jes Scheinpflug, Director of Communications
614 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka, IL 60093
Phone: 847-501-5760 x502 | Cell: 773-575-9406
E-mail: jes@open-communities.org
Website: www.open-communities.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

33 Organizations and Nearly 200 People Rallied in Solidarity *Groups Canvassed Local Businesses to Take Stand Against Anti-Muslim Bigotry*

CHICAGO, IL, March 21, 2016 – Yesterday, organizations, community groups, and congregations from across Chicagoland rallied in Evanston’s Fountain Square to stand against anti-Muslim bigotry. After the rally, groups canvassed businesses and homes to display posters supporting refugees and demand a stop to racial/religious profiling.

Open Communities’ speaker at the rally highlighted the connection between activists in Evanston in the 1960s with today. She said, “When Open Communities went door to door, right here in Evanston, in our fight for fair housing, the belief was that people didn’t support integrated housing. Few people in positions of power and realtors had given the idea that this was something most people were against. But our founders quickly realized that this wasn’t true. In one-on-one conversations, it was very clear that most neighbors wanted inclusivity and diversity. This is the overwhelming sentiment that Open Communities sees in our 17 north suburban communities.”

Representing Chicago’s Muslim Community Center at the event, Dr. Alia Ammar said, “Some repetitions of history must be avoided. The resurgence of bigotry and Islamophobia promoted within the current presidential race is particularly concerning to people whose moral values embrace common humanity and who clearly understand that ‘never again’ applies to all people at all times. MCC and PEACE are proud to join this interfaith multicultural coalition in this rally against Islamophobia.”

Together, co-sponsoring organizations affirmed:

Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim are enduring vitriolic, frightening levels of hate and violence throughout the country- being spit on, verbally harassed and abused, physically assaulted, and even shot. This hate and violence do not exist in a vacuum. It takes place in the context of ongoing and systemic Islamophobia and racism that are pervasive and deep within our society.

The undersigned organizations and the Chicagoland community publicly say: We stand against the many ways in which anti-Muslim and xenophobic hatred manifests itself, including hate speech and hate crimes; institutionalized racism and state-sanctioned violence; racial and religious profiling in all its forms; and prejudice that targets refugees and immigrants of all backgrounds.

American Friends Service Committee - Chicago
American Muslims for Palestine - Chicago
Arab Jewish Partnership for Peace and Justice in the Middle East
Beth Emet
CAIR-Chicago

Center for Inclusivity
Chicago Area Peace Action
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC)
Curt’s Café
First Congregational Church of Evanston, UCC

Forward Humanity
Freedom First International SCLC
GCE Lab School
Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation
Jewish Voice for Peace - Chicago
Lake Street Church of Evanston
Latino Resources
Main Street Alliance
Midwest Young Artists Conservatory
The Musical Offering
Muslim Community Center
North Suburban Teachers Union

Open Communities
Peaceful Communities
People Encouraging Acceptance thru Communication & Education
Public Interest Fundraising
Rainbow/PUSH Coalition
Roman Catholic Order of the Society of the Divine Word at Techny
Second Baptist Church
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
Tzedek Chicago
Unitarian Church of Evanston
YWCA Evanston/Northshore

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About Open Communities

Open Communities, formerly Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs, is a nonprofit organization that advocates for fair and affordable housing in 16 northern suburbs of Chicago. Our mission is to educate, advocate and organize to promote just and inclusive communities in north suburban Chicago. We are a leading voice for housing, economic and social justice in north suburban Chicago, working to promote inclusive communities that are welcoming to all. We work with current and prospective residents and local groups to promote economically and culturally diverse communities in north suburban Chicago. We provide fair and affordable housing counseling services, community education, advocacy, and organizing for welcoming communities.