

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
web site: www.open-communities.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“What Is Home” Community Gathering Will Explore Artists’ Interpretations of Home in North Shore Neighborhoods *Open Communities’ 12th Annual Fair Housing Month Event on April 19 Creates Space to Hear Voices of Marginalized*

Winnetka, IL, April 18, 2016 — In honor of Fair Housing Month, Open Communities and community artists from throughout the northern suburbs will gather on April 19 at Curt’s Café South in Evanston to express through poetry, music, dance, and spoken word their perspectives on the suburban Chicago neighborhoods they call home. The gathering, ***What is Home?: Access and Inclusion in North Shore Neighborhoods***, will be held from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., is free and open to the public, and will be replete with food, friendship and frank discussion.

“Norms and expectations are as important in influencing community diversity as fair housing law enforcement, especially in homogeneous areas,” said Neda Nozari Brisport, Director of Fair Housing at Open Communities. “*What is Home?* will highlight the fact that we, as individuals living in community, are essential to promoting a culture of self-expression within a welcoming space.”

The evening will be emceed by Brisport and Gabriel Machabanski, the Fair Housing team at Open Communities. They will give a “state of fair housing and equal opportunity” report in conjunction with the performances. Specifically, they will focus on patterns of discrimination still evident in 2016 and how to confront them.

[*What is Home?*](#) will “focus on inclusion issues, as well as the intersection of identity, assimilation, multiculturalism, and diversity,” Brisport said. “The evening’s performances provide perspective on the experiences of those too often labeled ‘the other.’”

Performers and speakers include Beto Defreitas and Huu Nguyen, capoeiristas from Quilombo Cultural Center; Vivian Harris of Skokie; Jason Reis of Easter Seals; Kari Carlson of Open Studios Project; Jones of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Stephen Perkins, hip hop artist and former ETHS student; Muryem Quadri, Muslim community activist; and students from New Trier, Evanston Township, and Glenbrook South. The students are Mohsin Waraich, Saarah Bhajji, Carrington York, Noah McKay, Devea Williams, Justin Tobin, Miranda Rivera-Kohr, and ETHS alum Stephen Perkins.

This year marks the 48th anniversary of the passage of the federal Fair Housing Act, which Congress passed in the wake of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s assassination. Fair Housing Month 2016 resolutions will be displayed at the event from the following: Highland Park; Niles, Skokie, Wilmette; and the Cook County Commission, which was submitted by Commissioner Larry Suffredin.

About Open Communities

Founded in 1972, Open Communities is a nonprofit 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. Its work includes the investigation of fair housing discrimination and landlord/tenant complaints, foreclosure and predatory lending counseling and prevention, Homesharing, immigrant leadership development, fair housing education and advocacy, and grassroots organizing. Its service area comprises the northern Cook and southern Lake County municipalities of Deerfield, Des Plaines, Evanston, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Highwood, Kenilworth, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Niles, Northbrook, Northfield, Park Ridge, Skokie, Wilmette, and Winnetka.

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported in part 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 interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the federal Government.