

PRESS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAKING HISTORY AGAIN: 2015 JUSTICE DAY MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MLK SPEECH, KICKS OFF 21ST CENTURY MOVEMENT

Family Day of fun and inspiration on Winnetka Village Green, site of historic King speech to end housing discrimination; keynote by NAACP leader; addresses by other social justice activists calling on all suburbs to be more open and welcoming by guaranteeing equal access

Winnetka, IL, June 18, 2015 – Marking the 50th anniversary of an historic address by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to end housing discrimination, north suburban residents will gather on the Winnetka Village Green on Sunday, July 26 to celebrate **2015 Justice Day** under the banner of *The Justice Project: The March Continues* – 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.

“2015 Justice Day will mark the official launch of *The Justice Project: The March Continues*, which reaffirms the ideals of our founders,” said Gail Schechter, executive director of Open Communities, an outgrowth of the North Shore Summer Project, which was a 1960s grassroots campaign to end exclusionary housing practices. “Thanks to their work, fair housing is now the law of the land. But there is still much more to be done to build what we call the welcoming community, which is one that ensures equal access and opportunity to everyone who works, visits, lives, or seeks to live in our neighborhoods.”

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. Hilary Shelton, Washington Bureau Director for the NAACP, will be the keynote speaker, and social justice leaders working in the areas of race, labor, environmental, disability, and immigrant rights; as well as gender equality also will be on hand.

Open Communities will mark the day Dr. King addressed nearly 10,000 people in Winnetka by urging support for its “Principles of a Welcoming Community”, which defines a welcoming community as one that is proactive in upholding the rights of all, regardless of income, race, sex, religion, national origin, presence of children, disability, age, sexual orientation or any other legally protected class. The Principles describe ways in which suburban residents can measure their communities’ progress towards a more inclusive culture in three fundamental areas: access, safety; and civic engagement. (For a complete copy of “Principles of a Welcoming Community” visit www.justiceprojectcontinues.org/principles-of-the-welcoming-community.)

“While we honor the past, 2015 Justice Day is very much about the future,” said David Borris, event chair. “We intend to mark the beginning of a hands-on, practical approach to making the ideals of the Civil Rights Movement – that we all learn to live together as brothers and sisters without regard to race, color, creed or economic status – a reality.”

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 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 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.