



FHEO REGION V NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

Regional Directors Corner Lon Meltesen

I am pleased to invite our staff members to enjoy the Inaugural Edition of our Region V FHEO Newsletter. Every day, the mission of FHEO, “To create equal housing opportunities for all persons in America by administering laws that prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, disability, familial status, and national origin”, is being fulfilled by every member of our staff in each of our three branches: Intake; Enforcement and Programs and Compliance. Further, the work that we do is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic where people’s housing choices are restricted in many ways. It is with great pride that our work has continued unabated as we continue to work in this remote environment. This Newsletter is dedicated to you.

In our Newsletter, it is our goal to recognize our staff and your wonderful achievements. Additionally, we want to share information with you as to what is happening within our Office as well as around our entire Region. In this edition, you will find information regarding April’s Fair Housing Month activities, May’s Public Service Recognition Week, and much more. I would like to thank all those who have worked on or contributed to the Newsletter, especially Stacy Sias. Without your efforts, this Newsletter would not have been possible. I hope you welcome the Newsletter and look forward to future issues to come. Thank you.



ENFORCEMENT.... Gordon Patterson

In this first edition of Region 5 FHEO’s newsletter I just wanted to say hi to all FHEO employees and tell you what a pleasure it is to be back in the Region after spending several years in Headquarters. While a lot of faces have changed over the years it is encouraging to see everyone’s commitment and dedication to the job of FHEO. I know working remotely in these trying times is difficult, to say the least, but I believe each and every one of you has risen to the challenge above all expectations. We continue to do the work of FHEO, and your spirit is truly inspiring. While teleworking 100 percent of the time has introduced unique logistical challenges, FHEO continues to intake complaints, investigate and conciliate cases, and complete compliance work – all remotely. We are even onboarding new employees remotely. So, for everyone feeling a little overwhelmed with all the work, help is on the way. From offering to take on new duties, to researching and informing everyone of available apps to help process the work, you have learned to adapt and help your fellow workers adapt. Keep up the good work and stay safe, as this shall pass.



The Power of Storytelling Kimberly Nevels



Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" is a play about a multi-generational Black family, the Youngers, in Chicago, IL and the conflict amongst the adults in the family about what to do with an inheritance. When the matriarch of the family decides to move the family from their apartment to a house in an all-white neighborhood, the play becomes a tale of fair housing. "A Raisin in the Sun" debuted on Broadway on March 11, 1959 and was the first play written by a Black woman to be produced on Broadway.

The fair housing action in the play was based on actual events from Hansberry's life. Her father, Carl Hansberry, was a prominent real estate broker. In 1937, he moved his family to the Woodlawn neighborhood in the south side of Chicago. At the time, Woodlawn was an all white neighborhood. Anna Lee and other neighbors brought an action in the Circuit Court of Cook County to enforce a restrictive covenant and enjoin the Hansberry's from occupying their home. "Under the restrictive agreement, about 500 Chicago property owners agreed that no part of the real estate should be sold, leased to, or be permitted to be occupied by any person of the colored race. The trial court held that *Burke v. Kleiman* (1934), in which the parties stipulated to the validity of the covenant, bound Mr. Hansberry even though he was not a party to that litigation. In *Lee v. Hansberry* (1939), the Supreme Court of Illinois affirmed the trial court's judgment." The Hansberry's appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of the United States. In *Hansberry v. Lee*, 311 U.S. 32 (1940), Justice Stone, writing for the majority, reversed the Illinois Supreme Court decision on the basis that neither party to the *Burke* litigation represented Mr. Hansberry's interests. *Hansberry v. Lee* set the stage for the *Shelley v. Kraemer* case which struck down racially restrictive covenants.

The headline of the Chicago Defender after the Supreme Court decision in *Hansberry v. Lee* read "Hansberry Decision Opens 500 New Homes To Race." Today, the Woodlawn neighborhood is 83% Black. Woodlawn is also the neighborhood that will house the Obama Presidential Center. The Woodlawn neighborhood has changed and continues to change since Lorraine Hansberry and her family moved into the house at 61st and Rhodes. But Lorraine Hansberry's play, which has been produced countless times since its Broadway debut, provides us with a powerful snapshot of one family's experience with segregation during their pursuit of the American Dream. Decades after its Broadway debut, "A Raisin In the Sun" reveals the power in storytelling.



New Employees Neighborhood



Carlton Cosby transferred to our region two weeks ago and immediately hit the ground running as an Intake Analyst. Carlton joined FHEO Region I in 2011 as a S.C.E.P. Fellow, while earning his Master of Public Policy degree from Brandeis University. He primarily worked in the Intake Branch while also executing GTR duties. Carlton transferred to Region IV in 2014, where he continued in the Intake Division - transferring to the Programs & Compliance Division in 2017. In his pre-HUD life, Carlton performed a number of community-focused roles: from managing successful State Senate campaigns and working for the Florida Senate; community organizing throughout Michigan; leading capacity building efforts at HBCUs through UNCF; to directing Scout Outreach programming with the Boy Scouts of America. In his spare time, Carlton loves to travel, read, and laugh – a lot. Carlton has a strong passion for family, community, and adventure. He is a proud alumnus of Florida A&M University; a United Way V.I.P. Board of Directors Training alumnus; and a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.



Andrew Tarkington is truly excited to begin his career as a new employee with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). His interest in serving those in our community began in college (UW-Parkside) as a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. He has had a variety of opportunities over the years to help individuals with housing. Last summer, he was given the chance to work with Legal Action of Wisconsin's Eviction Defense Project in the Milwaukee County Courthouse. Also, he recently graduated from the UIC John Marshall Law School in December 2019. During school, he worked in the Fair Housing Legal Clinic on campus. He decided at that time it would be a goal of his to continue this mission with HUD.



PUBLIC SERVICE CONTEST WINNER



Karla Harper is grateful that she was chosen as the winner of the Public Service Recognition contest where she has been in the position of Equal Opportunity Specialist (EOS) in the Chicago office of Fair Housing Equal Opportunity (FHEO) close to eighteen (18) years as of July 28th. However, she has spent the majority of this time serving in the position as Government Technical Monitor (GTM) for the Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) which has been rewarding. Throughout these years Karla has built valuable relationships with many Fair Housing Organizations and feels that the connections between FHIP's and FHEO has bridge the gap and provided her such a worthwhile privilege to grow and learn from the wealth of knowledge, understanding and work the Fair Housing recipients bring to FHEO.

After graduating from college before starting at HUD Karla worked for several organizations that laid the foundation of the direction her career would blossom into. She worked at CHAC, Inc. Housing Choice Voucher program in a very demanding environment. This is where she credits her organizational skills. As a client service representative, she had to interview section 8 clients to determine eligibility. After which, for a short period she was a property inspector ensuring housing quality standards were met by landlords. Karla's abilities led her to work for Housing Choice Partners- housing voucher program administering the suburban communities as a housing mobility counselor to affirmatively further fair housing reducing generational poverty through housing mobility. Surprisingly, she never knew that doors would open at HUD and would be able to continue using her knowledge gained throughout the years.

In Karla's time away from HUD she loves spending quality time and having fun with family and friends. Her biggest cheerleaders are her parents and the apples of her eyes are her nieces. Along with playing with her fur baby "dog child" Kodak the most adorable and loving dog anyone could want. She is devoted to many organizations and community service endeavors where she's able to use her leadership skills. Her true joy is the GLOW Diva project started with her sister to provide Hope, Happiness and LOVE to children, she's always seeking opportunities to pour blessings into someone life. Her favorite pastimes/hobby is interior decorating where she enjoys creating atmospheres that are reflections of individual personalities. Whatever, task Karla takes on she gives her best (100%); she's a team player with a willing spirit to aid and assist, motivate and encourage as a respectable professional to all. In closing Karla is grateful to those who have contributed such support and encouragement to her experiences within, around and outside of FHEO but credits her journey to the most important attribute her **FAITH** as the reason why she is Blessed.

"WE MUST BECOME THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE SO ALLOW YOUR GLOW TO SHINE!"
IS AN AFFIRMATION OF KARLA'S

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Work- Life Balance in “The New Normal”

By Jermaine Brown

The Coronavirus has changed many things in our day to day lives. Everything from how we greet one another and exchange pleasantries to the places we go, and who we go with, has been impacted by COVID-19. We wish for things that we once took for granted, like going to concerts, and sporting events, or watching our kids play soccer on Saturday afternoons.



As federal employees, we are fortunate to have jobs that afford us the opportunity to work safely from home while continuing to make a difference in people’s lives each day. The work we do is important and at times we can find it difficult to separate ourselves from it. As we face the realities of our new normal, days filled with recreational restrictions and blurred lines between work and home, it is more important than ever that we strike a work-life balance.

If you’ve ever found yourself completing reports in the wee hours of the night or answering emails when you are off duty the following suggestions are for you:

During work hours

- Create a routine that helps manage distractions and sharpens your focus. Included in the routine should be breaks that require movement, such as walking or stretching, anything that gets you out of your seat.
- Dress for work, this is a hard sell for some because of the convenience of PJ’s and casual clothes. However, dressing up puts you in a different mindset. Another added benefit is that changing from work to casual attire signals that you are done for the day.
- Seek a change of scenery at lunch time. You don’t have to go to a restaurant, lunch on the patio or under a tree in the backyard is wonderful this time of year.
- At the close of business answer your final email and shut down your computer. Make a concerted effort not to do any more work-related activity until the next business day.



During off work hours

- Create a routine that is completely different from your work routine. Spend time learning something new or engaging in activities you enjoy. Do something fun with family or friends or relax and indulge in some precious time alone.
- Get some exercise, 20 to 30 minutes of cardio has proven mental and physical health benefits.
- Take a virtual course, attend a virtual happy hour, or have a Zoom karaoke competition with friends.
- Do a random act of kindness for someone or help a senior in need.



These suggestions are not novel ideas and many more can be found by simply Googling the topic. What is important is that we are intentional about putting these things into practice. Our chosen profession is one of service to others. We cannot effectively serve others if we first do a disservice to ourselves. So, let’s be intentional, plot our course, and achieve a work life balance!

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The Fair Housing Bus Hits the Road During Fair Housing Month

Amy Nelson, Executive Director
Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana

In celebration of Fair Housing Month, the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana (FHCCI) kicked off a new fair housing outreach campaign. In partnership with IndyGo (Indianapolis' bus line), the FHCCI began the campaign with its first ever Fair Housing Bus. The bus will travel around the City through April and May. The campaign will also have interior informational cards in several buses through the summer. Starting in June and running through the fall, the campaign will then include side and rear panel fair housing announcements well. All with the purpose to educate the public on fair housing laws and the services available through the FHCCI. This campaign is being conducted through fair lending education funds the FHCCI is receiving from a fair lending resolution. The FHCCI also recently released a video,



[The History of Redlining](#), that the funds also supported (available on the FHCCI's YouTube page).

In 2019, the FHCCI reached a settlement with First Merchants Bank resolving the FHCCI's allegations of lending discrimination. The settlement also includes loan subsidies, multifamily affordable housing loans, donations to local community development nonprofits, a loan production office and full-service bank center, and other relief, all with the intent to affirmatively impact Indianapolis' majority black census tracts.



"The FHCCI and First Merchants Bank have created a roadmap for other financial institutions that are seeking to expand access to credit in underserved areas and ensure that every individual, group, and community enjoys equal housing opportunity and access in a bias-free and open housing market," stated Amy Nelson, Executive Director of the FHCCI.

The FHCCI's investigation was funded through a FHIP-Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI) Grant that was awarded to the FHCCI from HUD to conduct fair housing investigations and pursue enforcement actions to address violations. The FHCCI would not have otherwise been able to conduct these highly technical systemic investigations without HUD's support.

Learn more at www.fhcci.org



REAL TALK: Fair Housing Discrimination in the Midst of COVID-19

Diane Clements-Boyd

Executive Director, Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission

The virtual panel discussion focused on strategies to identify, address and overcome housing discrimination in the wake of the COVID-19. The conversation also focused on how housing policies may have a disparate impact on special populations as well as how discriminatory treatment may be visited on certain groups grappling with the health crisis on the basis of sex, national origin, race and disability. Housing experts and government officials discussed housing policies and the complexities of how housing discrimination can manifest in this era.

Lon Meltesen with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development spoke on issues related to COVID-19 and illegal housing discrimination. Amy Nelson with the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana spoke on housing legislative issues and COVID-19. Timothy Weir with the Evansville Commission on Homelessness spoke on the likely increase in homelessness as a result of COVID-19 and services for homeless persons affected by COVID-19. Garvin Senn with Legal Aid Society of Evansville spoke on landlord/tenant issues related to COVID-19, specifically, evictions.

The panel was moderated by Xavia Harrington, Professor at the University of Southern Indiana and Commissioner with the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Human Relations Commission. Mayor Lloyd Winnecke provided opening remarks followed by executive director, Diane Clements-Boyd.

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Special Thanks to Contributors

Lon Meltesen
Gordon Patterson
Kimberly Nevels
Karla Harper
Jermaine Brown
Amy Nelson
Diane Clements-Boyd

Produced by Stacy Sias

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