



Up Your Game: Use of the Creative Arts

National Fair Housing Alliance
The Fair Housing Act at 50:
Making Every Neighborhood a Place of Opportunity
 June 11, 2018

Inspired by the NFHA Poetry Slam

- Initially sought to invite the NFHA contest winner(s) here for our 30th Annual event...
- However, we discovered a vibrant local spoken word community which has become much more...



Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

Rachel Gleason

- An Open Door
- <https://www.facebook.com/fhcwm/videos/1962175793795969/UzpfSTlzNzQwMTA5OTc1NjgzNDoxMTQ3MDYyYnjl1NDU3MzM5/>

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

Rachel Gleason

- As part of our annual event, local spoken word artist Rachel Gleason provided a moving performance of her poem, "An Open Door", which brought the crowd to its feet.
- Her poem weaves together the emotions and complexities that surround the idea of home, awareness of one's own privilege, what it feels like to be turned away, and making self-observations that encourage those who have not encountered discrimination to consider the experiences of others.
- She is a singer/songwriter and works with public school youth to develop writing and speaking skills.

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

The Diatribe

Rachel is a member of The Diatribe.

- A local artists' collaborative and non-profit focused on empowering youth to find their voices.
- Mission is "to provide our youth with the platform, the stage, and the means to make their voices heard and to also let their peers and communities know that they, too, have the potential to become united and to make an impact."

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan


The Diatribe

- We created an interactive fair housing and social justice-themed curriculum for the purpose of enriching students and their families' **understanding of civil rights**, while cultivating creative writing and public speaking skills.
- Students/their families engage in exercises that examine the ways in which **where you live impacts how you live**, all while incorporating the highly engaging, inclusive culture of poetry and spoken word as facilitated by The Diatribe members.
- This work views **students as agents of change** and seeks to further the knowledge of their rights, community resources, and skills while also providing applicable tools to become proactively involved in the revitalization of their communities and neighborhoods.

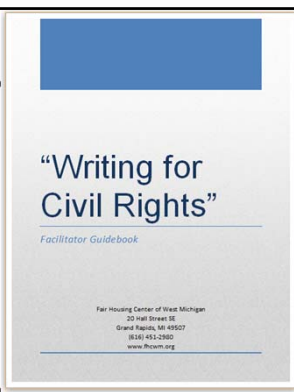

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan

The Diatribe

- Curriculum is designed to be delivered 1 hour per week for 10 weeks as the class schedule allows. This program is open to grades 9-12.
- Students spend first ½ hour learning about Fair Housing and Civil Rights; then apply their new knowledge in learning and comprehension exercises utilizing spoken word, creative writing, other forms of poetry
- Includes interactive presentations, live slam poetry performances, graded participation, community exploration, and other collaborative features to reach students and their families.




- We provide a facilitator guidebook to our poet partners, Rachel and Fable as well as the teachers
- We attend each class but only speak as needed
- Assist with student classwork oversight, discussion

Protected Classes

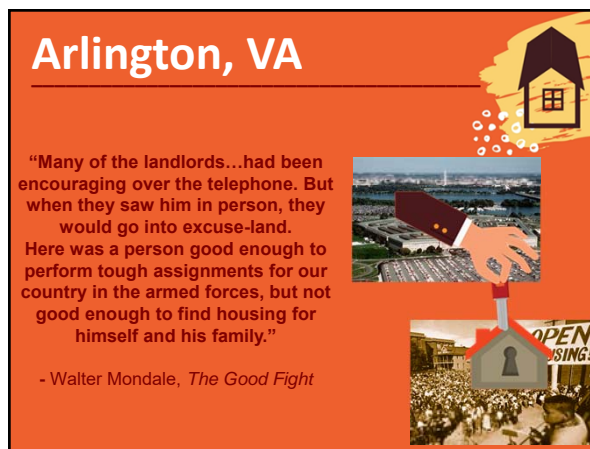
Federal	State
Race	Marital Status
Color	Age
Religion	Local* (GR)
Sex	Sexual Orientation
National Origin	Source of Income
Disability Status	
Familial Status	<i>Local* protections vary city to city.</i>



Arlington, VA

“Many of the landlords...had been encouraging over the telephone. But when they saw him in person, they would go into excuse-land. Here was a person good enough to perform tough assignments for our country in the armed forces, but not good enough to find housing for himself and his family.”

- Walter Mondale, *The Good Fight*



Activity




March for Fair Housing!

- With a partner, create a poster that you could use to march for fair housing.
- Choose one specific discriminatory action.
- Include clear words, a catchy phrase, and pictures.

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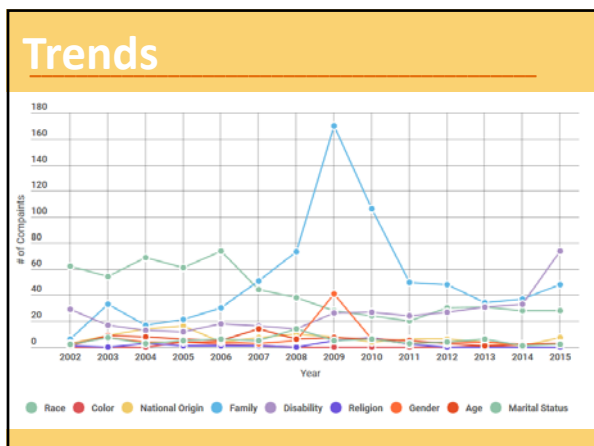
equal

no matter which language(s) I speak

Possible Reasons for Discrimination:

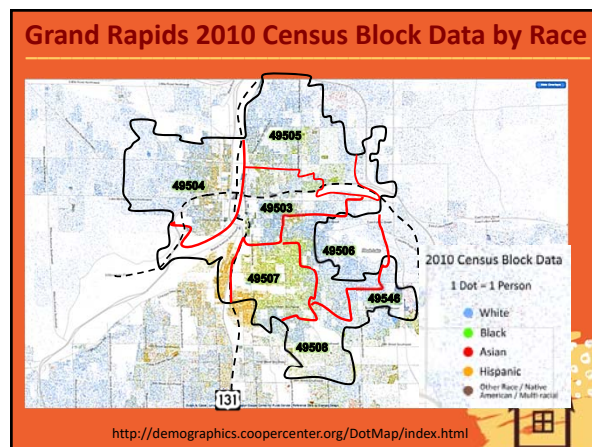
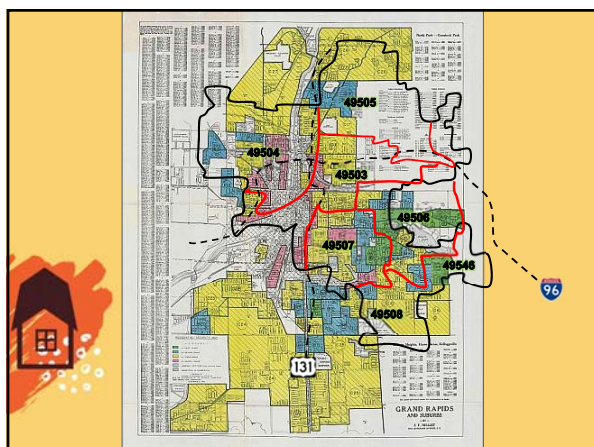
- Ability (Disability)
- Language
- Skin color
- Family size
- Employment
- Many more!!!





Testing

- Will a white tester be treated differently than a black tester?
- Will a tester without a disability be treated the same as a tester with a disability?
- Did both testers receive the same information?
- Were they both asked the same questions?



Ideas for Sharing

- Curricula could be adapted easily to other communities (please credit The Diatribe and the FHCWM!)
- Customize with local data, maps, case examples
- Change out the videos to explore areas of interest locally
- Partner with your local arts community first!
- FHCWM and Diatribe staff willing to speak to others to share our experiences
- Seek funding from local foundations, banks, etc.

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