

FEBRUARY '09



NEWSletter

Staying true to the mission by David Bos

Happy birthday to MHC!

Can you believe that MHC is 20 years old?! Some say: "Where does the time go?," while others say: "It feels like it was only yesterday!" During the life of this organization, we have had many accomplishments, and today there is great cause for celebration. But the question for the MHC staff and Board of Directors has been how we can celebrate our future while honoring our past.

The answer we came to was to use MHC's *Newsletter* as a showcase to share the stories and voices of founders, past Executive Directors, former Board Members and activists whose passion has been the growth of affordable housing in our community. There will be one article in each edition of this year's *Newsletter* dedicated to this celebration and reflection.

To start us off, we thought that it would only be appropriate to share with you the voice of David Bos, an instrumental founder of MHC. A great big thank you for all who helped MHC reach this honorable milestone. With your continued support, we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary before you know it!



When we first held discussions about the lack of a citizen-based housing opportunity coalition in Louisville about two years previous to MHC's incorporation, we never suspected that MHC would become one of the premier such organizations in the country. In my opinion, our success is due to the fact that MHC has, through the years, stayed true to its original purpose and mission — **to promote fair, decent, affordable housing and engage all the potential stakeholders in the task.**

It was amazing to see 50 to 100 people at Christ Church Cathedral come out regularly to affirm the necessity of such an organization and to plan for its future. People were also ready to act because of the deep cuts in the federal housing budget by the Reagan administration.

(We're talking at least two-thirds, you will remember.) These times underlined the importance of cooperation at the local level in order to avoid complete disaster.

Then there were those who stepped up to shape this rather amorphous enthusiasm into a functioning entity. I'm thinking of people like **Joe Gliessner** who was the first chairperson after getting officially organized; and **Ella Roberts**, one of first steering committee (pre-board) members who welcomed us every month

at the offices of the Urban League; and **Janet Daken**, who, with her husband **Bill**, facilitated a lot of our communications. Our monthly meetings at Highland Presbyterian Church would draw 100 to 150 people, and it seemed as if every one of them were willing to take an active part in the formation of organizational structure and programming!

We had a tiger by the tail and the time had come to think about staff. In late 1988 and early 1989, we opened discussions with **John Richards** of the **Mary and Barry Bingham Foundation** with the result that a three year grant was obtained primarily for the purpose of hiring an

Executive Director. **Suzy Post** was the first of three outstanding EDs, each of whom presided over major advancements while maintaining

continuity and consistency with what had gone before. Suzy recruited an even broader spectrum of involvement than before (what an amazing breadth of constituency!) and helped put the organization on sound financial footing. Here we could go on for some time but it suffices to say that MHC became more diverse in every conceivable way.

Then **Jane Walsh** took over from Suzy and helped MHC become a major local housing research institution. Its timely and relevant reports were read, quoted and referred to in all corners of our



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Metropolitan Housing Coalition

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Staying true to the mission

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community as accurately reflecting the state of housing in Louisville in all of its many facets. Once again, Jane's genius, like Suzy's, was to involve so many in the research — government, the private and for-profit sectors, non-profits and University of Louisville.

Now, under the direction of **Cathy Hinko**, MHC has sharpened the edge of its advocacy — in the recommendation of the research reports, in the public representations favoring a local Housing Trust Fund, in attention to just how developments on the macro level are affecting the grassroots, and in reviving the Fair Housing Committee (with Suzy Post as chair), among other things.

How many organizations large, or small, can claim to have had such consistent leadership spread over three tenures, all keeping MHC true to its purpose while expanding its capabilities? We owe a large debt not only to them but to the many individual and organizational members who have continued to lend their support to the cause of fair, decent, accessible affordable housing for all, including the successive Board members and Chairs who have kept their "eye on the prize" and were not content to be a passive body but who have provided critical and active support for the staff. 🏠

To learn more about upcoming events and other items of interest to affordable housing advocates, go to our website at www.metropolitanhousing.org.

While you're there, you can check out our new look! Send us your email address if you would like to receive our new e-newsletter!



An unequal practice

How race affects Louisville mortgage lending

You may remember back in August, MHC drew public attention to a then recent National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) report titled *Income is No Shield Against Racial Differences in Lending II: A Comparison of High-Cost Lending in America's Metropolitan and Rural Areas*.

This report examines subprime and near prime (Alt-A) loans from more than 219 metropolitan areas, as reported under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data from 2006, the most recent publicly available data. The data shows that minority consumers, regardless of income level, are most at risk of receiving high-cost home mortgage loans. This report, which can be found on the MHC home page under the news section, has been of special interest to MHC leaders and coalition partners because it illuminates some very disturbing facts about mortgage lending practices here in Louisville.

According to the report, minorities are paying more for mortgages, even as their income levels increase. Loan price disparities, as compared to white counterparts, were more common for middle- to upper-income African-American and Hispanic borrowers than pricing disparities were for low- and moderate-income minority borrowers.

"In Metro Louisville, 42% of middle- and upper-income African American families have sub-prime mortgages compared to 18% of white families with the same incomes," states **Cathy Hinko**, Executive Director of MHC. "Our lending institutions and their

regulators need to take note of this racial disparity. Louisville *cannot* afford this lending practice. Think of the consequences of household money paid for interest instead of spent in the community."

High-cost loans have significantly contributed to the current foreclosure crisis. The overwhelming and unexplained prevalence of high-cost lending in minority communities suggests that some level of discriminatory behavior continues in the mortgage finance market, but we know that in

order to solve this problem, we must first fully examine the issue. The data is startling, but only human voices can tell the story of what this data really means for our citizens. This is where you come in!

You are invited to our first community forum — on **February 19, 5:30–7:30pm at Memorial Auditorium, 2nd floor, 970 S. Fourth** — to discuss how race affects Louisville mortgage lending, learn about this issue, and ask questions about the disparate use of mortgage products. Panelists will include representatives from the banking community and the mortgage

industry, as well as housing community advocates.

MHC is working in coalition with Multi-County Clients Council, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission and Legal Aid Society. It is also sponsored by Multi-County Clients Council. For more information, give MHC a call at 502-584-6858! We hope to see all of you there! 🏠

SCHEDULE *of* EVENTS

Calling all affordable housing advocates!

FEBRUARY 10 & 17 — Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) General Assembly Lobby Days on Tuesday, February 10 for the *Restoration of Voting Rights Lobby Day*, and Tuesday, February 17 for *I Love Mountains Day* (rally at noon). Check out www.kftc.org or call 502-589-3188 for details. 🏠

FEBRUARY 12 — **Check out the new date rescheduled due to weather!** River City Housing's Second Annual Wine Survivor and Silent Auction on Thursday, February 12 at 7pm. As a plus for housing friends, the event is at The Green Building, 732 East Market — the first LEED Platinum certified commercial building in Louisville. Come for a good time, at a great place, with an awesome agency to support. For more info, contact info@RiverCityHousing.org. 🏠

FEBRUARY 17 — Regulatory Barriers Working Group Meeting on February 17, 5:30–7:30pm at the Presbyterian Community Center, 731 South Hancock. Come to work with community members concerned with vacant lots and alleviating the stress empty properties place on neighborhoods. 🏠

FEBRUARY 18 — **Check out the new date rescheduled due to weather!** Human Relations Commission is sponsoring *Continuing the Dialogue Conference* on Wednesday, February 18, 8am–4pm at the Galt House, 140 N. Fourth. Keynote speaker is multimedia journalist from NPR's *News and Notes*, Farai Chideya. For more information, call 574-3631. 🏠

FEBRUARY 19 — *An Unequal Practice: How Race Affects Louisville Mortgage Lending* on February 19 at 5:30–7:30pm at the Memorial Auditorium, 2nd floor, 970 S. Fourth. Come to this community forum to learn and ask questions about Louisville's disparate use of mortgage lending products by race. Panelists will include representatives from the banking community, mortgage industry, and housing community advocates. Call MHC at 584-6858 for more information. 🏠

FEBRUARY 19 — Non-profit Housing Alliance Meeting. As always, the third Thursday of the month. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty. 🏠

FEBRUARY 20 & 21 — *The Green Convene: Building a Coalition of Local Organizations Promoting Sustainability in Local Public Policy* on Friday, February 20, 5:30–9pm, and Saturday, February 21, 8:30am–1:30pm at Glassworks, 815 W. Market. Join this coalition of over 60 businesses, community leaders and policy makers to promote sustainability in your community! Visit www.greenconvene.org to register and for more information. 🏠

FEBRUARY 25 — Fairness Lobby Day, Capital Rotunda, Frankfort, on February 25 at 1pm. Come to let your voice of fairness for all be heard! Please call Fairness for more information at 893-0788. 🏠

MARCH 14 — Third Annual Raisin' the Rent Party to benefit St. John Center for Homeless Men on Saturday, March 14, 8pm until midnight at Kentucky Center for the Arts, Grand Lobby. Charge is \$15 at the door or by calling 584-7777. Enjoy music by Ed Humphries and George Poole, gaming tables with fabulous prizes, cash bar, hors d'oeuvres by the Bristol and Bearno's. Attire is snappy casual! **NOTE:** This party is thrown in the spirit of the Harlem Rent parties made famous in the 1920's and 1930's when rent in the area began to double and triple. A few days before the landlord would show up to collect the rent, neighbors would have friends over, charge admission, and collect enough money to help their neighbors avoid eviction. All proceeds from our Rent Party will support the transitional housing costs of the Residential Recovery Program. 🏠



Want to know the best way to reach affordable housing advocates? Publicize your event in our newsletter — free for members! Call Phoenix at MHC at 584-5868.



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HIGHLIGHTS FOR FEBRUARY ... Happy Birthday to MHC ... Staying True to the Mission ... How Race Affects Louisville Mortgage Lending ... Schedule of Events for Affordable Housing Advocates ... Publicize Your Event in MHC's Newsletter ... MHC Membership Renewal Form

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