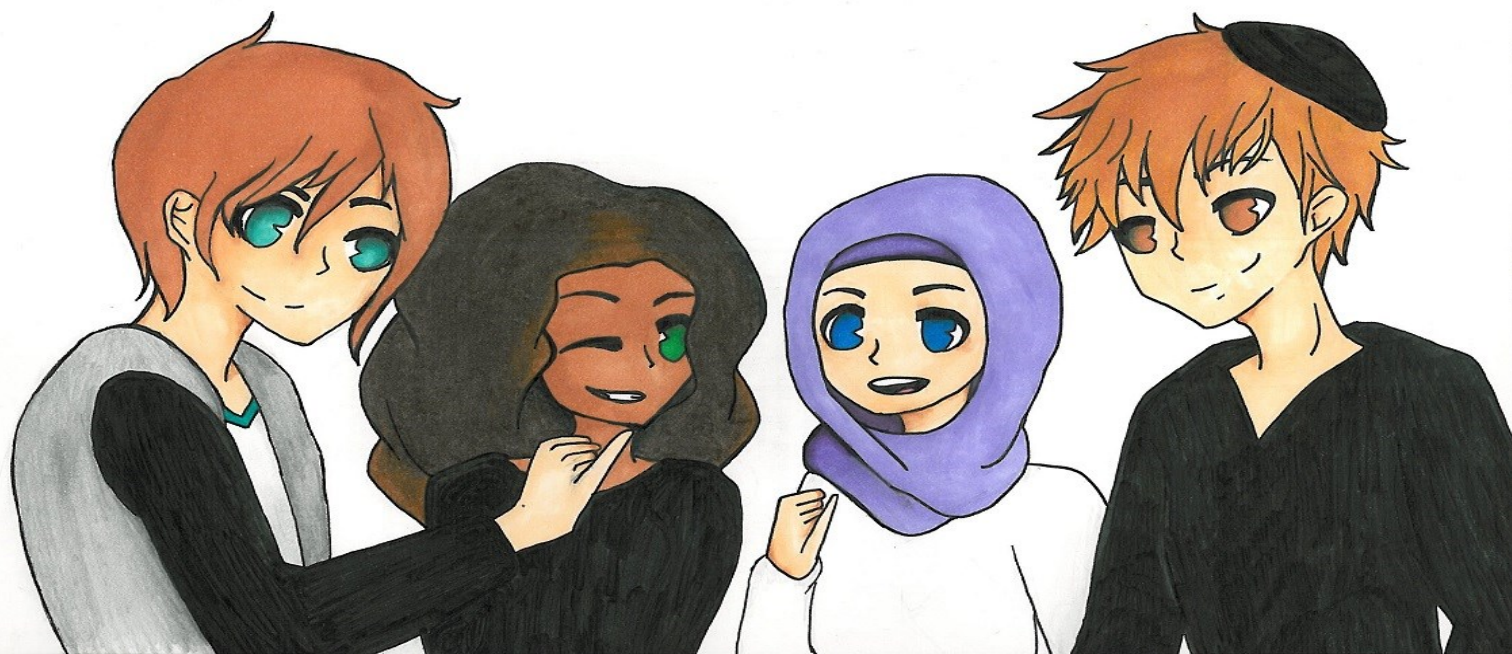


Stop Hate
Dont Discriminate

2nd Place Poster Contest Winner:
Sydney Baxter



Meet The Staff

Patricia A. Kidd, Esq.
Executive Director

Hollie Nebelski
Program Manager
Education and Outreach
Coordinator

Nicholas Nebelski
Foreclosure Prevention Manager
Testing Coordinator

Nicole Saunders
Housing Assistant

Donna Stock
Controller

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Darrell Webster
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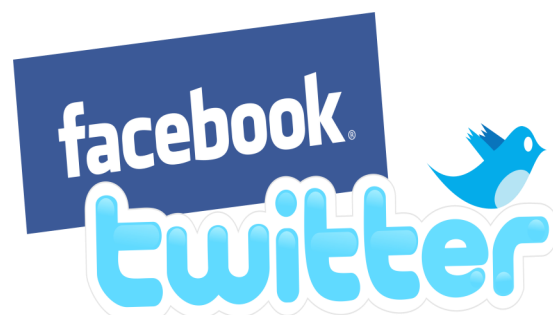
Jennifer Sheehe
Legal Aid

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Contact us for more information

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Your Quarterly Housing Connection

ISSUE 1 | VOLUME 2 | 2016

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Announcing our Affordable Housing and Rehabilitation Grant for Veterans

By: Hollie Nebelski

Fair Housing Resource Center is excited to announce that we were awarded a generous grant in the amount of \$40,000.00 from The Home Depot Foundation to assist Veteran homeowners with necessary home maintenance and repairs.

In the counties of Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula, FHRC serves approximately 34,117 veterans, according to the U.S. Census data from 2013. The veterans within our communities, and in some counties more so than others, have a desperate need for assistance with rehabilitating their homes as well as making them ADA accessible. Unfortunately at this time, there are not any rehabilitation programs available for any residents, let alone veterans. Our overall project objective is to provide decent and affordable housing assistance to veterans that will include homeowner rehabilitation and assistance in making their home ADA accessible.

FHRC hopes that by providing these funds to the local Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula Veterans, they will be able to maintain their properties and/or make them ADA accessible. The grant is available to eligible homeowners residing in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula County who fall at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI) and demonstrate a need for assistance.

Eligible repairs include, but are not limited to: appliance replacement, ramps, balcony, roof and step repairs, and other home maintenance costs. If eligible, homeowners can receive up to \$2,500.00 towards a home maintenance repair.

If you or someone you know is a veteran and in need of assistance to maintain their household, contact our agency at 440-392-0147 or stop in and pick up an application. There is also a printable formatted application located on our website at www.fhrc.org.

*"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."
- Martin Luther King Jr.*



Going Green at Home

by Nicole Saunders

go green

The change in the weather means that many of us will be spending more time outdoors. This is a great time to use some eco-friendly environmental practices around the outside of your home and your lawn. While outdoor lighting is an effective safety feature, it can also be costly. Outdoor lighting, especially old fixtures, use a lot of energy and they can drive your energy bill soaring. One way around this is to replace old fixtures with energy-saving varieties or even solar powered fixtures. Consider using these for lighting your walkways as well as illuminating your garage and front and back entryways. LED lights are also very bright, use very little power, and will last 5-10 times as long as standard outdoor lights. Birds eat slugs, snails, grubs, caterpillars and other pests that destroy

plants. Put up birdfeeders and nesting boxes, including those you have made from recycled articles, to encourage more to visit. To attract more birds, try adding native plants to your lawn for a touch of natural beauty. Native plants, trees, or shrubs require minimal maintenance and have adapted to the climate, which usually means these plants can withstand local weather and diseases. Another eco-friendly plant practice is to collect rain water and use it for your plants. You can make one or purchase one, and putting it under your gutter's downspout will fill it up quickly in no time. Watering the lawn during the afternoon hours results in most of the water evaporating in the heat. This wasteful practice does little to nourish the lawn. Instead, water at night or before the sun rises to allow the grass to retain the majority of the moisture without losing it to evaporation. Automated sprinklers or sprinkler systems can help with

this if homeowners are not around during these times.

Lastly, using non-toxic fertilizers and pest control agents are better for your plants and reduce the amount of toxins that run-off into our waterways. Organic fertilizers can be found at most nurseries or home improvement stores, and although may be a bit more expensive, do less damage to the environment. And when you're done mowing, leave your clippings on your yard. Those grass clippings make great mulch and will help you save water as well. Be sure to compost your other yard waste. It's easy and the composter will turn your waste into great mulch for use throughout your yard and garden.

Sometimes it is nice to be thanked!



To Regina Barnes and
Patricia Kiddy, with
great admiration.

Or scratch somebody's eyes out.

Whatever makes you
feel better.

Thank you so much for being my
advocate in making my 7-year-old
Maine Coon Cat, Monk, an official therapy
cat. Monk is hazy about his precise duties,
but will continue to share my bed and
couch, tease for treats, and have playtime.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

St. Mary Magdalene Festival	June 2-June 5
St. Gabriel Summer Festival	June 8-June 12
Kirtland Strawberry Festival	June 16-June 19
Willoughby Cruise In	June 18
Fairport Mardi Gras	June 30-July 4

July

Tall Ships Challenge	July 7- July 10
St. John Vianney Festival	July 7 – July 10

Painesville Party in the Park	July 15-July 17
Willoughby Arts Festival	July 16
Headlands Beachfest	July 16

August

Vintage Ohio	August 5-August 6
Feast of the Assumption	August 12-August 15
Lake County Fair	August 17-August 21
Mentor City Fest	August 26-August 27



SPRING MOVE OUT By: Nicole Saunders

Spring has sprung and with it... comes moving! This is a very popular time to move since the snow has melted and the weather has broken. FHRC is very familiar with the challenges that individuals face when moving to a new home, and have compiled a few different tips and tricks to ensure that your move is as smooth as possible.

- **Document everything.** This is an important yet often overlooked step that many individuals fail to follow when moving. Everyone hopes that people are honest and forthcoming; however, that is not always the case. Make sure that you document everything from when you or your tenant is moving out, conversations with your landlord/tenant and/or promises or arrangements made.
- **Read your lease agreement!** If your landlord requests a 30 or 60 day notice prior to vacating the unit, make sure that you provide it. Many tenants find themselves in a bind when they fail to inform their landlord of their intent to leave. This could create fric-

tion with your landlord and put your landlord in a compromising situation. If a tenant fails to follow through with notifying their landlord, they could be considered breaking their lease agreement. If you need assistance writing your letter, visit our website at www.fhrc.org.

• **Complete a move in/move out checklist.** A move in/out checklist is a wonderful tool for both landlords and tenants. Often times when you move into a unit you find that there is damage from the previous tenant. A move in/out checklist is where you write down the items that are damaged (i.e. carpet stains, broken windows, screens). After you complete the checklist you provide a copy to your landlord. This way when you vacate the premises you are not left footing the bill for damages that were already present when you moved in. If you are a landlord/tenant who would like an example of our move in/out checklist template, please call our office or visit our website.

• **Document using pictures and videos.** Pictures and videos are essential tools to help document your unit upon move in and move

out. Most individuals are worried about what a landlord will charge or a tenant has damaged when they move from the premises. This is the perfect way to document the condition of the unit. If the landlord attempts to charge for damage to the unit that you did not make, pictures and videos are your documentation to show the condition of the unit upon move in and move out.

- **Clean!** Take all the screws and nails out of the walls and ceiling and putty them smoothly. Dust/wipe down/clean all ledges, windows, doors, light switches and outlets. Vacuum and mop all floors, making sure you don't leave any stains on the carpets. Clean out all drawers, cabinets, refrigerator and stove. Wipe down any marks on walls and take out any garbage.
- **Provide a forwarding address.** Make sure to give your landlord a valid forwarding address to send the security deposit and/or written itemization to.

Moving is a stressful time and there can be a lot of unforeseen issues that can occur. Make sure that you are prepared to move, have the resources available to do so, and make the effort to return the premises back to the landlord in the manner it was received. If you have any further questions on moving please call our office or visit our website for additional information.

EFFICIENCY IN YOUR HOME

By: Nick Nebelski

Eliminating your carbon footprint can be a daunting task but did you know that it could also help you save money? We have all heard the term "Carbon Foot print" but what does that really mean? Carbon footprint is defined as the amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused by your daily activities. Reducing energy consumption in the home can go a long way in reducing your impact on the environment but it can also help you from shelling out big money on utility bills. There are several simple and cheap things you can do to help.

- Change your light bulbs to energy efficient bulbs. Not only can this help you reduce your utility bills, they typically last longer and are brighter than traditional bulbs.
- Install a programmable thermostat. This will allow you to program your heat and air conditioning to shut off when you are not home. This can significantly reduce energy costs.
- Install a "Smart" power strip. These power strips are available at local stores. These devices have the ability to turn off outlets when they are not in use, reducing energy consumption and reducing your bills.
- Seal and insulate any drafty areas. These areas may have been a nuisance in the winter but Spring and Summer are perfect times to address them. Not only are these fixes affordable, they are typically very simple to complete.
- Unplug battery chargers when not in use. Your phone may continuously draw power even if the phone is not plugged in.

Help protect our environment. Reducing your footprint can seem intimidating at first but with these simple tricks, you can be on your way.



Fair Housing Resource Center, Inc. Board of Trustee's Recruitment

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBER?

FHRC is looking for passionate individuals to join our Board of Trustees to assist with the strategic planning and guidance of the organization. If you are an advocate for Fair Housing and would like to be a part of an empowering and dynamic non-profit, please contact the agency at:

(440) 392-0147





Rules that Discriminate

1. Children may not ride bikes on the sidewalk.
2. Persons with Downs' Syndrome must have supervision at all times in the pool.
3. Pool use for Whites Only.

Do any of these housing provider rules strike you as illegal? Rules that target specific groups may violate state and federal fair housing laws. Groups treated differently based on race, religion, color, sex, national origin, families with children and people with disabilities are protected under our fair housing laws.

Let's look at the first example that focuses on "children." Are adults allowed to ride bikes on the sidewalks in this housing development? While landlords are allowed to make rules to govern behavior, such rules should be neutral and not single out children—adults also can create prob-

lems by their behavior. Rule #1 could be viewed as indicating a preference for tenants without children. Since people want to live where they feel welcome, rules that target children can be illegal. If the behavior of riding bikes on sidewalks is a problem, a rule saying, "no riding bikes on the sidewalk" would be fine.

Rule #2 also singles out a protected group. This example is based on a housing provider in our area who had a similar rule. The housing provider was afraid that the tenant with Downs' Syndrome would drown, and made a rule. But the housing provider did not look at the individual tenant who had taken years of swimming lessons and based the rule on a stereotype, and in doing so violated the law. This housing provider could require everyone to pass a swim test or allow no one to swim without supervision, but it could not make a rule singling out someone

based on disability or perceived disability.

Rule # 3 is obviously wrong. Yet just a few years ago such a rule was posted on a swimming pool by a Cincinnati-area landlord. Happily, the tenant won when he challenged this blatantly illegal rule.

When moving to a new area or housing provider, ask to see a copy of the rules—whether it is a homeowner association, a mobile home park or apartment building. If something seems wrong to you, check with Fair Housing Resource Center. You have a right to feel welcome in your own home and not to be burdened with rules that break the law.

By Diane Citrino

FHRC would like to extended a congratulations to Ms. Citrino for recognition in the CMBA Journal for Pro Bono Attorneys in Cleveland.

HOUSING HOLLIE

Dear Housing Hollie,
I have just recently lost my job and am currently 1 month behind on rent. I am a single mother with 3 children and have had a difficult time coming up with my rental payment, let alone a security deposit and first month's rent to move into a new unit. I have heard that they cannot evict me because I have children. Is that true?
Sincerely,
Scared

Dear Scared,
Unfortunately, there are no protections for families with children when it comes to evicting you from your household. If you did not pay your rent, you will have to go through an eviction hearing and the judge will have to make the decision on whether or not you may stay. However, there are many different resources available for individuals in your current position. Contact your local 2-1-1 for a referral or contact Fair Housing for more information regarding our TBRA rental assistance program.

Good Luck,
Housing Hollie

Dear Housing Hollie,
My landlord and I have not been on the best terms as of late and he has threatened to kick me out multiple times. Today, when I got home I found that the locks have been changed and I cannot access

my house. Is he allowed to do that?
Sincerely,
Locked Out

Dear Locked Out,
Finding yourself in that situation is very stressful so first and foremost don't panic! The only time that a landlord is permitted to change the locks to a unit and force you to move out is if a judge has granted an eviction. The landlord is forced to go through the eviction process in order to remove a tenant from a unit. Even then, the tenant is given 10 days' notice to vacate.

If you find yourself in this situation we highly suggest you solicit help from an agency such as ours. In these situations, we often will contact your landlord on your behalf and inform them of the landlord tenant law and the proper eviction procedure. If it is not resolved a tenant does have a right to seek remedies for damages, loss of possession and to be granted possession of the unit back.

Good Luck,
Housing Hollie
Dear Housing Hollie:

I moved into my current rental about 3 months ago. Last weekend I allowed my 10 year old daughter to have a sleep over. Two days later I received an eviction notice from the office stating they are evicting me from my residence because of a noise complaint that was made to management. On that day the police were never called and I was never

informed that it was a problem. Is it fair that after one neighbor complaint that I am to be evicted?

Sincerely,
Helpless

Dear Helpless:

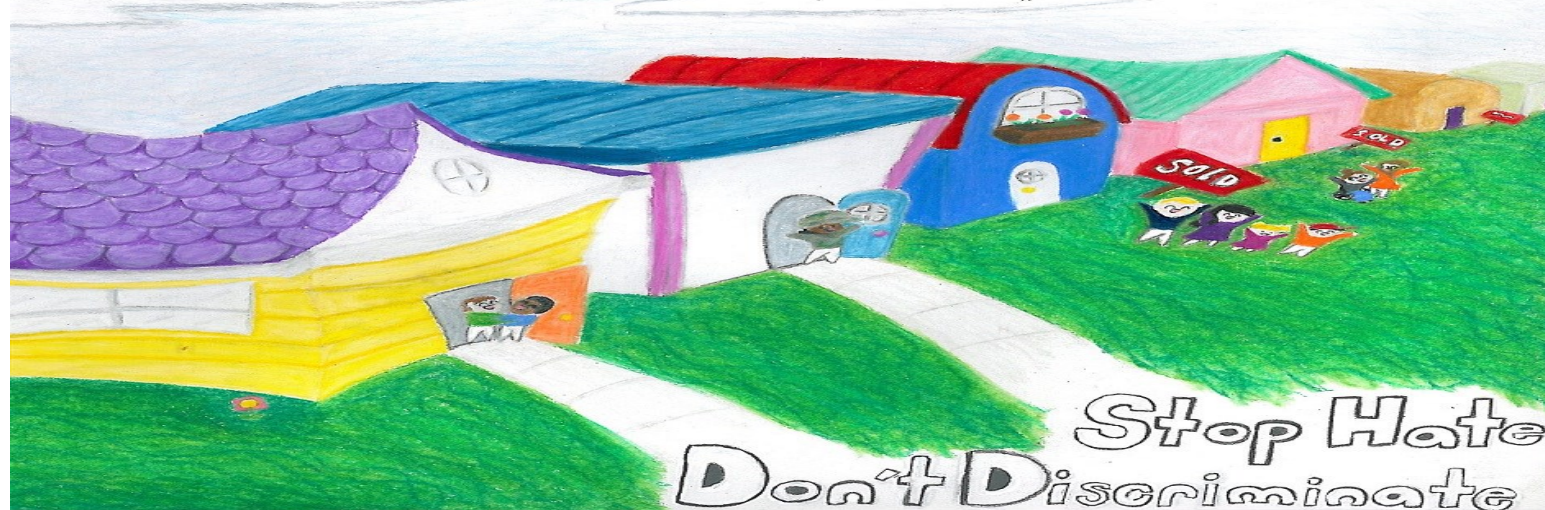
We all know that when living in multi-family housing that you are not always aware as to how much noise you are making and if it is bothering them. Especially if you were never told that it was an issue. There is a proper procedure to ensure that all tenants have peaceful enjoyment in their units. A landlord cannot evict you based off of one complaint for a breach of peaceful enjoyment. The landlord has a responsibility to notify you in writing that there was a noise complaint and to provide you with a 30 day notice to correct this action. If after 30 days noise complaints are still being received and it is bothersome to other tenants, then the landlord would have a right to evict based on peaceful enjoyment. If your landlord still refuses to work with you, contact your local Fair Housing agency for assistance.

Sincerely,
Housing Hollie

Want to ask Housing Hollie a question? Submit your questions to hollie@fhrc.org. For more information visit www.fhrc.org

The statements above is not intended as legal advice or a substitute for advice of your own counsel

1st Place Poster Contest winner : Brianna Yee



Lead In Lake County? part 1

We have all read and listened to the many stories surrounding lead based paint concerns from Cleveland and Flint, Michigan and the stories are disheartening. Many of us feel that since we are here in Lake County, we are insulated from the problems those areas are facing. However, we should be drawing our attention to our own community to help protect our families and children in our own neighborhoods. Long term exposure to lead, a naturally occurring metal used in everything from construction materials to batteries, can cause serious health problems, particularly in young kids.

Lead is toxic to everyone, but unborn babies and young children are at greatest risk for health problems for lead poisoning. Unsafe lead levels in children can lead to a wide range of symptoms, from headaches and stomach pain to behavioral problems and anemia. Lead can also affect a child's developing brain.

Our agency and the Lake County Board of Commissioners are proposing to expand, enhance and strengthen its lead hazard control activities through a new grant initiative and pending application with the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for lead hazard control activities. This new project (if funded) will allow the County to assist families with children under the age of 6 years old, abate lead hazards in their homes.

Additionally, the County and Fair Housing are seeking to implement a Healthy Homes program to help provide educational materials, workshops, and home repairs to Lake County residents. It is our hope that we can bring a program to Lake County to help our residents protect the next generation with lead information, education and abatement.

By: Patricia Kidd Esq.

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR...

Continued from previous page

Be courteous of your neighbors and surroundings. You may own or rent a single family home and feel as though it is in your right to do whatever you feel like. Just be mindful and courteous of your fellow neighbor. If you are hosting a party it can't hurt to inform your neighbor beforehand and come up with a plan if it gets too loud or invite them over to enjoy the fun. If you are mowing your lawn, remember that maybe everyone else does not wake up at 7:00 a.m. to do yard work. If your dog has a tendency to bark at every leaf that floats by, be mindful of leaving your dog outside early in the morning or late at night. Being aware of your surroundings is a polite practice to utilize to keep the peace.

We know that issues may not always be able to be resolved by using these easy tips, so when in doubt contact Fair Housing for any neighborly disputes or issues on how to correctly address them. Remember that being a member of the community means that you do your part to be mindful and courteous of your neighbors.



Recovering Your Security Deposit

Nicole Saunders

This time of year brings about change and one of the changes may be moving out of your rental unit. If you fall into this category, there are several steps that you can take to ensure that you get your security deposit back.

- Document the condition of your apartment/unit both before you move in and when you move out;
- Provide a 30 or 60 day notice (it's in your lease) to your landlord prior to vacating the unit;
- Ask your landlord for a move out walk through or inspection;
- Take pictures and videos of your unit to record the condition it was returned ;
- Return the unit to the condition it was received ;
- Provide a follow-up address to your landlord where you will want your deposit returned ;
- Discuss any damages, repairs or issues that you have had with your unit with management ;
- Return the keys to the unit to your landlord .

Once you have cleaned your unit, provided adequate notice to your landlord, returned the keys, provided a forwarding address and taken pictures or videos the

next step is to wait 30 days. Your landlord has 30 days to assess your unit and then return your deposit to you. The landlord must provide a written, itemized list of any costs for repairs or unpaid rent that are deducted from the security deposit. If your landlord fails to provide your deposit to you after 30 days then it is in your right to file a claim in small claims court for the portion of the security deposit that has been wrongfully withheld. It is imperative to follow the proper steps upon move out to ensure that you receive the money you put down on your unit.

Damages to the unit are items that can be charged against your deposit that are beyond "reasonable wear and tear." Reasonable wear and tear is unavoidable deterioration of the dwelling and its fixtures resulting from normal use. For example, carpet wear due to normal traffic is wear and tear. However, a hole in the wall or window screens is not.

Taking care of your unit and following the proper procedure for security deposit return makes for a smoother transition from your rental unit to your new home. For further information contact our agency, or visit our website at www.fhrc.org.

FHRC'S POSTER CONTEST WINNERS!!!

BRIANNA YEE

1st Place



2nd Place

SYDNEY BAXTER

NATALIE UPHOLZ

3rd Place



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!!!

FHRC would like to thank everyone who participated in our April poster contest. It was a huge success and we were overwhelmed by all of the entries. We would like to give a special thank you to Ridge Junior High, North High School and Heritage Middle School for all your creative posters. We are already looking forward to next year's contest!

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR *by Hollie Nebelski*

As time and technology progress, many concerns are brought to our attention regarding neighbor disputes, social media bashing sessions and neighborhood issues. Before social media there was a time when parents could let their children play outside without the bullying and negativity of neighbors. Individuals could knock on their neighbor's door to borrow a couple eggs or a cup of sugar. There was a time that if something looked suspicious at our neighbor's house that the police were called and the neighbors were informed. However, as time progresses our communities are changing and judgment and bullying through social media is almost common place. Neighbors are fighting regarding where they can park their cars on the streets and noise complaints are being made over a barking dog. Instead of compromising or speaking to the neighbor regarding the issues, people are turning online to bash and disparage others. What happened to our wonderful tight knit communities?

When going to purchase or rent a home, one of the first noticeable aspects of the home is the neighborhood. The neighborhood places a large impact on where people are willing to live, so being a good neighbor is important. Being a respectful neighbor should be common sense, however, sometimes people are not aware that they are being bothersome. If you have an issue with your neighbor such as; kids playing in your yard, dog poop, or parking issues, talk to your neighbor. Do not assume that they know it upsets you or are aware there is an issue. The same goes with any relationship, address the issues calmly and kindly and give them the benefit of the doubt. If the issue is then not resolved there are other measures you can take to get them fixed.

Positive communication is key! In any type of relationship discussing the problems and issues that arise is one of the number one factors of a healthy relationship. Discussing issues with your surrounding neighbors will allow you the peace of mind that they are aware of the problems and most individuals will ensure that it does not happen again. Starting a confrontation with a neighbor only leads to frustration, and discomfort in

and around your own home. Provide your positive communication face to face. We have seen that individuals are using social media to vent their frustrations and concerns, which can lead to larger problems to deal with. We understand your apprehension to discuss issues with your neighbor for fear of retaliation or disagreement, but using Facebook to announce your neighborly concerns allows for other individuals input, which often leads to something similar to cyber bullying.

No one is perfect! While most neighborly issues are easily fixed, remember that you are part of a community and that mistakes happen. "It takes a village to raise a child." If you see a neighbor kid doing something inappropriate or crossing the street dangerously, tell the child and tell the parent. Parents do the best that they can and maybe they walked away for a moment to check on dinner or use the restroom. By telling the child you are reinforcing the parent's rules and making the family aware that little Timmy does not properly look both ways when crossing the street. I know 15 years ago I would not think twice if a neighbor hollered at me for crossing the street incorrectly and would threaten to tell my parents! 15 years ago that was the normal, however, in today's society individuals prefer to watch the issue play out and make remarks on Facebook for the lack of parenting. Remind yourself that you live within a community and that everyone needs to be mindful of one another.

Seek out additional assistance for an issue. Some individuals are apprehensive in confronting a neighbor because they are afraid of retaliation or an argument. Fair Housing assists clients on a daily basis with issues surrounding your housing and neighborly concerns. It is easier for a third party to mediate a situation with a neighbor to resolve the issue then it is to stop an ongoing parking war or constant disputes. There are free services within everyone's community that can provide the support to ensure that disputes and disagreements do not get out of hand.

Continued on next page