



## Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs

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### Interfaith Housing Center active on the North Shore

<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/winnetka/news/1235632,wn-communicators-102308-s1.article>

October 23, 2008

by Margaret Feit Clarke

Amidst the beehive of activity at the Winnetka Community House, you'll find the offices of Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs. Interfaith arrived on the North Shore scene in 1972, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, as our society grappled with the toxic reality of racial segregation. Religious and lay leaders, members of the North Shore Summer Project, were among the first to call attention to it and invited Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak on Winnetka's Village Green on July 25, 1965. In 1968, only four months after King's death, Congress enacted the federal Fair Housing Act giving rise to fair housing centers across the nation that acted to enforce the new laws and safe guard against housing discrimination. Today, Interfaith Housing Center, like many of her sister fair housing agencies, continues this work in sixteen of Chicago's northern suburbs.

Discrimination against families with children, immigrants, older adults, and members of what fair housing laws identify as "protected classes" continues to be a serious reality. Interfaith offers workshops and educational resources, organizes to address housing injustice, and sends volunteer testers into the field to gather data to help establish whether a pattern of discrimination exists.

Interfaith provides several other direct services to individuals with housing needs and recently expanded its mission to address the area's accelerating foreclosures. In March, HUD-certified Interfaith to provide Foreclosure Counseling to distressed homeowners in foreclosure, default, or with anticipated mortgage challenges. Today's economic downturn has also focused attention on Interfaith's Homesharing program, an increasingly important cost-saving measure that empowers homeowners and working individuals struggling with housing costs to find a creative solution together through shared housing. Additionally, Interfaith mediates landlord/tenant conflicts, often as the sole resource for north suburban renters in need of advice and support. Promoting affordable housing policies to support the preservation and expansion of fair and affordable housing is all part of our mission to foster neighborhoods that are welcoming to all. Interfaith lauds recent efforts on the part of New Trier Partners to include affordable units as part of the development at the Fell Company site.

All are welcome to learn more about our work, share refreshments, and meet Interfaith Board and Staff at the 36th Annual Meeting, Global Crisis. Local Solutions. Getting Beyond the Housing Credit, Sunday, October 26, 2008, 3-5 p.m. at Hemenway United Methodist Church, 933 Chicago Avenue in Evanston. The public is invited to enjoy the insightful comments of guest speaker, Ed Jacob, Manager/CEO of North Side Community Federal Credit Union, who has worked for years to level the playing field for low- and moderate-income families. To learn more: 847/501-5760 x 501 or [www.interfaithhousingcenter.org](http://www.interfaithhousingcenter.org).

*Margaret Feit Clarke enjoys the collaborative energies of the Winnetka/Northfield Communicators group. To learn more about joining this group, contact Mary Cherveney at (847) 501-2076. Next month's article will be by Laura Blair, Director of Communications for New Trier Township District 203.*

#### **Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs**

*works for housing justice through service and advocacy:*

Homesharing ~ Foreclosure Prevention Counseling ~ Fair Housing Investigation

Housing Justice Education, Organizing & Advocacy ~ Landlord-Tenant Complaints

Learn more about Interfaith's work in Chicago's north suburban communities at: [www.interfaithhousingcenter.org](http://www.interfaithhousingcenter.org) ~

847/501-5760 (phone) ~ 847/501-2741 (TTY)