



# THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

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## ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHT

Rev. Andres Diaz, Chairman of the Bergen County Chapter of National Committee on the Self-Development of People, United Presbyterian Church, gave the Council a welcome financial boost when he presented a check from the Committee for \$4,356.54 at our annual meeting on September 15, 1977.

The check is slated to be used for the Council's Community Outreach Program, which is designated to reach a wider circle of minority families in the area who need housing assistance. In addition to Rev. Diaz, who is Pastor of the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Englewood, Committee and FHC member Lewis Brown, Jr. of Ramsey, took part in the presentation.



Lee Porter, FHC and United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young.

FHC was amply represented at Andy Maguire's forum on Human Rights with UN Ambassador Andrew Young in December, 1977 at Bergen Community College. FHC staff member Mary Lou Petitt served as moderator.

## FHC WINS HUD CERTIFICATION

Last spring, FHC was certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as an approved housing counseling agency. FH staff member Joann Peay has been selected to supervise the new program, which provides counseling and financial management services to help low income families meet the responsibilities of home ownership and apartment tenancy.

Mrs. Peay feels the program provides an expanded service to FHC clients, and invites anyone interested in such a service to call her at the FH office.

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Seated l.to r.: Exec. Dir., Lee Porter, Deanne Bammer, Oakland, Stg.1 to r.: Jim Wyatt, Englewood, FH Pres., Rey Graham, Pat Wellington, Wyckoff and Rev. Andres Diaz.

## HOUSING REPORT

For the year ending May, 1977, 474 new families registered with FHC; 388 apartment seekers and 86 home buyers, a 28% increase over the previous year. By year's end, 60 client families had moved into homes or apartments in white neighborhoods in 25 different Bergen County communities.

In this time, 13 complaints were handled; 9 through the Division on Civil Rights and 4 by FH attorney Jim Sacher in U.S. District Court. End results: 9 families moved into disputed housing, one complaint was withdrawn, and two are still pending.

This fall, complaints were being processed at the unprecedented rate of one a week at the office. In 5 instances, the office dealt directly with the broker or landlord with the result that all 5 clients moved into apartments. Seven complaints filed with the Division on Civil Rights resulted in 4 move-ins, with a fifth client ready to move in the spring.

## RECENT SUCCESSES

A Nigerian man, 36th son of an African chief, was turned down for an apartment in Hackensack because the broker said his credit was bad. A FH housing counselor confronted the agency with contrary evidence, the man's credit was approved, he was offered the apartment and has moved in.

A couple with a young child, looking actively for a house to buy in Bergen County, called FHC in the summer of 1976. After fighting off brokers' attempts to show them homes only in integrated neighborhoods, they found a house they wanted in Dumont, through a broker recommended by FHC. They have moved in, and are delighted with the welcome they found in their new neighborhood.

## RECENT SUCCESSES (CON'T)

In answer to a newspaper ad, a man applied for an apartment in Hackensack, but felt he ran into racial discrimination. After sending a white friend to apply for the same apartment, our man contacted FHC, who negotiated directly with the broker involved. Not only was the apartment obtained, but the case provided FHC with the opportunity to remind the landlord of his prior agreement with FHC and to work out a new agreement on his future treatment of minorities.

A couple put down a deposit for an apartment in Elmwood Park but was stalled by the management for three months. Based on past experience with this particular complex, FHC advised the client to call the N.Y. rental office and threaten a complaint. FHC followed up with a similar phone call. Within a day, the landlord accepted the couple as tenants and they have moved in.

These are just a few of our "success stories". FHC is constantly working to fight discrimination and see to it that our clients get a fair shake. If you, or someone you know, suspects discrimination because of race, religion, sex, national origin, or marital status, call us at 489-4692 or 489-3552. We'll get action!

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

FHC is currently making up a colorful new mailing piece describing the advantages of living in Bergen County in a special effort to assist minority homeseekers who are looking for housing in our communities.

We need the names of any black fraternal and professional organizations to whose mailing lists this brochure could be sent. We also need members willing to send it out to friends and fellow workers. If you can help in either way, please contact Joe Scott, 652-0649 (evenings) or Nancy Reis at the office (days).

## "FRIENDS OF FAIR HOUSING"



L. to R.: Charles Bromley, Cleveland Heights, Ohio; Dr. Ann Schrueder, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Kay Lueken, Southfield, Michigan; Lee Porter, FHC, Executive Director, New Jersey.

### SHARING OUR EXPERTISE

The Council continues to be a resource for an expanding circle of groups throughout the country. Last October, Lee Porter participated in a Fair Housing Conference in Detroit, Michigan, outlining how to build community support for fair housing and how to coordinate the efforts of private FH groups with those of local officials.

In December, Lee Porter and Jim Sacher spoke at a two day legal seminar on Fair Housing and Lending in Williamsburg, Va., sponsored by HUD and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The seminar explored the impact of the Federal Fair Housing law and the 1975 Equal Credit Opportunity Act. Lee was featured as the luncheon speaker while Jim conducted a workshop in which he described FHC's imaginative litigation approaches and the role of the private attorney in this field.

The Council receives requests daily for information in connection with its racial steering suit and other activities. Jim has spoken to groups in both Ridgewood and Hackensack, and

The Friends of Fair Housing, an organization designed as the Council's "helping hand", had its official kickoff on October 1, 1977 at the home of Jean and Artie Best of Teaneck. Present were Eloise Dargan, Pat and Joe Hudson, Helen and Roy McBean, Sadie White, Teaneck, Sidney Swan, New Milford, and Mary Ann McCalla, Haworth.

According to Ms. McCalla, the FH staff liaison to the Friends, the new group will sponsor fund-raising and other supportive activities to aid the Council.

As an opener, a HOLIDAY DISCO was held on December 23, 1977, organized by Stephanie Jones of Ridgewood. Marc 'D', a professional deejay also of Ridgewood, provided the music and door prizes were supplied by Mary Ann McCalla, Downbeat Records of Englewood and G & G Liquors of Teaneck.

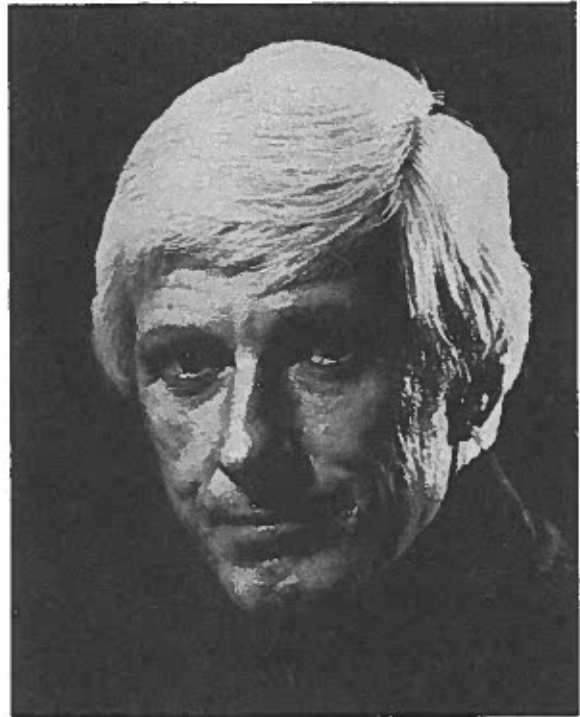
On March 15th, the Friends sponsored FHC'S NIGHT AT THE RACES, a gala sporting evening at the Meadowlands Racetrack, attended by 85. A delicious dinner in the Handicapper Room was followed by lots of excitement in the Clubhouse, including a race in honor of the Council. FH clients Mr. & Mrs. Arlin Hooks were seen leaving with big smiles, and Chairperson Ann Miller reported the evening as both a social and financial success.

Since the first meeting, new members of the Friends include: Isabel Baker, Dr. & Mrs. William Jones, Mildred Campbell, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Maloy, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Donald Thompson and Mr. & Mrs. Lawson, Teaneck; and Stanley and Juanita McBean, Fort Lee. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the Friends should contact Mary Ann McCalla at the office, 489-4693 or Helen McBean, 837-5036.

provides legal assistance and material to groups in N.J., Manhattan, Suffolk County, and Haverstraw, N.Y., Fairfax and Richmond, Va., Atlanta, Ga.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COALITION

The Bergen County Community Development Coalition, a network of 20 County organizations started by FHC to encourage the use of federal funds to improve the living conditions and housing of low and moderate income residents, has presented a proposal jointly with the County Housing Authority for the 1978 County CD applicaiton. Approved by the Freeholders, the almost \$500,000 funding would be used for a study of short-term crisis housing; a County landbanking/land option program to acquire scattered sites around the County for small low-priced housing units, and a congregate housing project for the elderly.



MEMBER IN THE NEWS

Last spring, the Coalition used its \$45,000 initial allocation to enter a state-sponsored "Affordable House" contest ( also jointly with the Housing Authority). FHC volunteer and current Housing Authority employee Adrienne Hamilton has organized a committee of 40, representing banks, unions, builders, civic officials and citizens groups, which is developing the County's entry of a two-family house within the means of families earning \$15,000 a year or less. Mary Lou Petitt, Coalition chairperson, noted that the amount of money allocated to housing has increased from \$55,000 in 1975 to \$3.3 million in 1978.

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As part of its Outreach efforts, FHC has contacted several radio and TV stations in the area. If you see or hear one of our advertisements, could you please let us know?

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Playwright Dick Bruner, longtime Ridgewood Fair Housing member, had two of his plays running in New York City this winter. In December, FH staff and volunteers had a theater party for A Small Disturbance, which centers around a controversial couple who meet at a Fair Housing covered dish supper. Wine, cheese, and discussion with Dick and the actors followed the performance.

In February, Dick's other play, Amistad, which won the National Playwright Contest award last year, opened at the same theater.

The play, based on an actual slave-ship mutiny on Long Island in the 1800's, is being looked at for a screen version, possibly starring Mohammed Ali.

Dick has just finished two other plays during a month's long residency at the Millay Colony for the Arts in the Berkshires.

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