

To the Friends and Supporters of the Fair Housing of the Dakotas:

I wanted to inform everyone that on Friday, September 4, 2009, I notified the Board and Staff of the Fair Housing of the Dakotas (FHD) that I would be leaving the agency. I will be assuming a position with another fair housing organization.

This was a very difficult decision for me. I have so enjoyed my work at the FHD. I had an amazing Board of Directors who has consistently lent their support to me both professionally and personally. Our staff is simply incredible in their professionalism and abilities. We have been able to accomplish so much despite being a small, under funded non-profit serving a large geographical area. Ultimately, the offer I accepted was one with new challenges and was simply an opportunity I could not pass up.

I am incredibly proud of the work and accomplishments of the Fair Housing of the Dakotas. I started with the FHD back in December, 1997. Looking back on my 11+ years at the FHD, we have accomplished so very much toward decreasing incidents of housing discrimination:

- We have conducted hundreds of educational trainings and workshops to educate the public on their rights and responsibilities under Fair Housing Laws. Most were available free of charge. Our trainings are extremely highly evaluated by attendees.
- Back in 1998, we were receiving about 500 contacts from North Dakotans on housing issues as compared to over 1,700 contacts in 2008.
- We recognized that there was not a similar agency serving the needs of South Dakotans. As a result, in 2003, we added South Dakota to our service area and continue to see increases each year in contacts from South Dakotans who have housing questions.
- The number of discriminatory advertisements have dramatically decreased in both North and South Dakota over the last 10 years.
- We have had several precedent setting fair housing cases which have opened up housing to North and South Dakotans regardless of their protected basis.
- Several of our cases have resulted in retrofitting of inaccessible multifamily buildings which have opened up that housing to people with disabilities.
- We have had 4 major cases addressing sexual harassment against women in North and South Dakota which have resulted in the opening up of housing free from such harassment.
- We have continued to expand our web site, newsletter and publications available to the public to encourage compliance with Fair Housing Laws.
- The Fair Housing of the Dakotas is a highly respected organization in our area and nationally when it comes to addressing housing discrimination.

However, much work remains. I will be there to offer any assistance to the FHD as it makes this leadership transition now and in the future. It is very important to me that the FHD continues to build and grow in meeting its mission.

At this time, I anticipate my last day at the FHD to be in late October. I will leave with great sadness but with also great pride. Thank you to all of you have assisted me over the years, lent your support, provided guidance, let me vent and made me laugh. I will miss you all and look back with such fond memories.

Amy S. Nelson