FALL FUN EVENT – GATHERED FRIENDS AND FUNDS

By Mary Leathy

On October 20th more than 40 HOME staff, members and supporters came together at HOME’s 5th annual Fall Membership Networking event, held at the 2nd Cup Café on Broadway. Participants celebrated HOME’s history, and contributions to the City of Buffalo, and surrounding areas, while keeping an eye towards HOME’s future through networking and recruiting new members.

The evening’s highlight was a trivia show, emceed by HOME Members Melissa Cavagnero and Collin Gehl. Guests competed for much coveted HOME paraphernalia, as well as tried their luck at fabulous gift baskets—all donated in the name of fair housing; the scrumptious Caribbean buffet, and homemade apple cider was also enjoyed by all.

HOME member Collin Gehl and Board Member Melissa Cavagnero – The emcees of the trivia show.

Associate Director, Shannon M. Koehn and Assistant Corporate Counsel of the City of Buffalo, Joel Moore

Associate Director, Shannon M. Koehn, commented, “It was so wonderful to reconnect with old acquaintances, network with friends, and recruit new HOME members!”

Be sure to check out our website (www.homeny.org) for upcoming events. We hope to see you next time!

For more information Contact Mr. Perez at 716-854-1420 (or email Mr Perez)

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH – JOIN TODAY!

The conference, which had a strong attendance, brought together supporters of fair housing and civil rights from a variety of local organizations, as well as members of the general public. For many, the big draw was the keynote speaker, Assistant Attorney General Thomas Perez, who heads the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. Mr. Perez is not only native to the Buffalo area, he had gone to kindergarten in the very building where the conference was being held (the Harlem Road Community Center); a fact he thoroughly enjoyed.

Mr. Perez covered two main areas of his address: the first, demonstrating the continued need for fair housing law and the agencies and people that fight for it; and the second, reenergizing the people who currently do the work. To answer the question, “Why do we still need fair housing laws?” Mr. Perez shared some examples of cases that he has worked, some of which were nothing short of outrageous (such a property manager denoting her KKK affiliation on her business cards). Other examples sounded all too familiar for many people in the audience, especially HOME staff and supporters.

Following up the examples of some of the discrimination cases he has worked, Mr. Perez shared stories of times when he was reminded of the importance of the work that he (and many in
From the Director:

**GIVING THANKS**

*By Scott W. Gehl*

On this Saturday before Thanksgiving, the ornate spire of St. Louis Church rises one block to the north against a very blue sky. This architectural gem has been one benefit of HOME’s 22 years at 700 Main Street. When the driving snow made St. Louis disappear, I always knew it was time to give consideration to sending staff home early.

As construction continues furiously at Main and Ferry, our days on the third floor of this old industrial loft building are numbered. General Contractor Paul Lamparelli has projected that HOME’s new offices will be substantially complete by the end of December. We are attempting to choreograph a move of our operations during the first part of January—even though work on the ten apartments upstairs will continue for another 45 days.

When HOME’s offices moved from 1490 Jefferson in 1989, we had a staff of four, a much simpler operation (in pre-computer days), and much less “stuff.” I learned in high school Latin that the Roman Army’s heavy baggage was called impedimenta. HOME has more than a little of that.

As challenging as the next 60 days will be, we are thankful for all those whose determined work, and incredible generosity have gone into realizing the dream of a Home for HOME. Our move to Main-Ferry is an essential component of raising the visibility of our 45-year-old civil rights organization, and sustaining its future.

Last night in a North Buffalo restaurant, I encountered a table full of HOME members. Some mentioned the Thanksgiving cards they received earlier in the week.

For the past few years, it has been our custom to send a Thanksgiving greeting to our supporters. Rather than just bear a printed signature, Shannon Koehn and I have signed each one—in an effort to personally convey our appreciation for the members who contribute because of their belief in the importance of fair housing, and a community free of discrimination.

We really mean it.

Another way to contribute HOME’s Nominating Committee is in the process of compiling a list of potential candidates to serve on HOME committees and the Board of Directors.

Because HOME’s mission—promoting the value of diversity and assuring the people of Western New York an equal opportunity to live in the housing and communities of their choice—is far broader than can be accomplished by any agency with a budget of only $620,000, we have always relied on volunteers to leverage the efforts of our professional staff, and do essential work.

If you would like more information on opportunities to participate, contact Nominating Chair Bill Berry at bberry@lsed.org or 853.3072X208.

**Another new addition**

HOME’s former social worker, Nicole Derrick and her husband Mark are the proud parents of Evelyn Grace Derrick, born in the first days of November. Congratulations to Nicole and her husband and to young Evelyn’s big brother, Collin.

In the last issue of Insight we proudly announced the birth of Ella Claire Gholston, who is pictured below with her parents.

This truly is a season to give thanks.

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**INSIGHT CONTRIBUTORS**

- **Scott Gehl; Jennifer Metzger Kimura; Mary Leahy; and Rayna Grossman, Editor**

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