

## Did You Know? It Happens Here...

Shared by Anne Hiskes

I generally don't make New Year resolutions. I feel badly when only a week or two into the new year these resolutions have fallen by the wayside. I am making an exception this year, and this is why.

Several years ago, I returned to live in my hometown of Grand Rapids after an absence of 40 years. In my youthful and naive memories, Grand Rapids was a virtuous town of churches and philanthropy where Dutch immigrant families could live the American dream through hard work and resourcefulness. All this is true, but I did not know that:

- Grand Rapids ranked second from the bottom of the 52 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. for how African Americans are doing economically. (*Forbes*, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joelkotkin/2015/01/15/the-cities-where-african-americans-are-doing-the-best-economically/#34e8d56c164f> )
- Grand Rapids has a documented history of managerial racism. (*A City Within a City*, by Todd Robinson)
- 74% of Black renters pay too much for housing, and renters of color are more likely to be paying more than 30% of their income on rent. ("An Equity Profile of Grand Rapids", p. 75, <https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/equity-profile-of-grand-rapids> )

When I learned these facts about my hometown, I was shocked and dismayed. As a result, I have resolved to do what I can in 2021 to make statistics like these part of Grand Rapids' distant past.