

A Message from MFY's Chair



Thomas E. Dunn
Board Chair

The past 12 months have been exciting and productive for MFY. Our dedicated staff served over 8,000 clients, saving tenants' affordable apartments, preventing foreclosures, winning back wages, protecting consumers, and helping families adopt children.

I am proud to report that many of the firms represented on our Board of Directors joined MFY in winning important decisions.

Debevoise & Plimpton successfully defended MFY's right to meet with residents of adult homes without interference in a NYS Court of Appeals case, in which **Greenberg Traurig** submitted an amicus brief. **Kelley Drye & Warren** and **Davis Polk & Wardwell** submitted amicus briefs in another successful NYS Appeals Court case involving employment discrimination by the NYC Department of Education. **Abbey Spanier Rodd & Abrams** is co-counselling a class action lawsuit against a home health care agency that underpaid hundreds of workers, **Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler** is working with MFY to challenge the deceptive practices and housing law violations by the "three-quarter house" industry, and **Harwood Feffer** is helping MFY to challenge unfair debt collection practices in foreclosure cases.

Your generous support has enabled these successes. We thank you and urge you to continue your support in the coming year.

2011 HIGHLIGHTS

Defending Homeowners from Abusive Foreclosure Practices

Since launching its foreclosure prevention project in 2008, MFY attorneys have made thousands of appearances at court-mandated settlement conferences on behalf of distressed homeowners in Staten Island and Queens, two of the state's hardest-hit areas. In addition to saving scores of homes, their work has saved taxpayers over \$12 million in revenue that would have been lost if these homes had been foreclosed. MFY also filed a class action lawsuit against Bank of America for failing to adhere to federal regulations, and recently filed suit against a large foreclosure law firm for unfair debt collection practices.



Keeping Seniors in Their Homes

Mr. B is one of a growing number of seniors who landlords try to evict from rent-regulated apartments. Mr. B had lived with his mother most of his life. A few years after her death, Mr. B was tricked by a cousin who was working with the landlord into signing an agreement giving up his apartment,



believing he was signing a lease. Under the agreement the landlord would pay Mr. B's cousin \$96,000 to have Mr. B move out. When Mr. B did not leave, the landlord went to court to try to evict him. MFY represented Mr. B, persuading the judge that the stipulation was a sham. After a long trial, the court ruled that Mr. B was entitled to succeed to his mother's tenancy. He is among the 4,000 tenants MFY's housing programs help each year.

Winning Unpaid Wages for Low-Wage Workers

Valerie Hall, pictured at right and at a City Hall rally on the cover, is one of hundreds of workers MFY helped to recover unpaid wages, winning a \$26,000 settlement. In other cases, two live-in nannies received \$95,000 after working for several years for a family that paid below minimum wage and no overtime, and an immigrant construction worker won a \$48,000 settlement. MFY also recouped tens of thousands of dollars in Unemployment Insurance benefits for workers whose applications had been improperly denied.



A Permanent Home for Two Teens

Pro bono attorneys at Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP helped Daisy, 13, and Diana, 16, to have a permanent home. As young children, the girls were cared for by their grandmother, but when she died they were placed in foster care. Mrs. B,

their mother's cousin, and her husband successfully petitioned for custody and, after caring for the girls for 11 years, sought help from MFY to adopt them.

MFY recruits, trains and mentors over 120 attorneys each year who handle custody, guardianship and adoption cases as part of MFY's Pro Bono Kinship Caregiver Law Project.

Protecting the Rights of People with Disabilities

For over 20 years, MFY has fought to improve conditions and to end the warehousing of people with mental illness in adult homes. In November, MFY filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of all adult home residents against the New York State Department of Health for failing to enforce corrective action orders or issue violations after investigators found that a home infringed on residents' rights and safety. The suit charges that the Department's procedures violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, the state constitution, and the Administrative Procedures Act in allowing operators of the homes multiple opportunities to appeal a violation in closed-door, off-the-record proceedings while giving no notice or opportunity for residents to be heard.



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