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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Landmark Settlement for New York City Adult Home Residents State to Offer Housing in the Community and Services to Enable Independence, Integration

NEW YORK, July 23, 2013— Adult home residents in New York City, together with the U.S. Department of Justice, reached a landmark settlement with the State of New York. The settlement ensures that thousands of residents of 23 large adult homes will have the opportunity to live in their own homes with the services they need to succeed and be part of their communities.

When asked how he felt about the settlement, which would provide adult home residents with mental illnesses the opportunity to live more independently, Plaintiff Raymond O’Toole answered, “Freedom is here—almost. Freedom and the ability to grow.”

Said Plaintiff Ilona Spiegel, “I’m thrilled about this settlement. At my adult home, they don’t do anything to inspire you or encourage you to move forward. I know how to take care of myself. I want to work my way back to independence.”

“I’m happy that a settlement has been reached by the parties,” said Plaintiff Steven Farrell. “This case puts a face on people with mental illnesses and our struggle to be integrated back into the community at large.”

“After decades of advocating for the rights of adult home residents, we are thrilled to arrive at this point,” said Jota Borgmann, senior staff attorney at MFY Legal Services, Inc. “Now when residents ask us ‘How do I get out of here?’ we will have an answer for them.”

“MFY has been at the forefront of adult home litigation for decades, exposing poor conditions and civil rights violations. We are delighted to see hope for the many residents who have endured living in these homes for years. ” said Jeanette Zelhof, Executive Director of MFY. “We have every confidence residents will take advantage of the opportunity this settlement offers and move on to independent living where they will regain their dignity and become active members of their communities, no longer relegated to institutional settings.”

“This settlement gives adult home residents the opportunity to thrive in the community,” said Kevin Cremin, MFY’s Director of Litigation for Disability & Aging Rights. “They’ll live in their own homes, where they will have the freedoms most of us take for granted—to choose when to wake up, what to eat, how to spend the day, and who to spend it with.”

With pro bono assistance by Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton, and Garrison LLP, the plaintiffs’ legal team sought to resolve claims that New York State is violating the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Supreme Court’s *Olmstead* decision by failing to afford adult home residents an opportunity to live in the “most integrated setting” appropriate to their needs. The U.S. Department of Justice sought to resolve similar claims. After extensive negotiations, the residents, the U.S. Department of Justice and the state reached this landmark agreement which will end the

unnecessary segregation of thousands of people with mental illnesses.

Under the agreement, the state will provide as many scattered-site, supported housing units as necessary to afford all adult home residents with serious mental illnesses the opportunity to live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs, and will provide and maintain community services and supports.

The U.S. District Court must approve the settlement. The parties have asked the Court to schedule a hearing on the fairness of the settlement.

The Plaintiffs are represented by MFY Legal Services, Inc., Disability Rights New York, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, Urban Justice Center and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, LLP.

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