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Tenants vs. addict centers

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A BROOKLYN Supreme Court judge paved the way last week for hundreds of tenants to sue a landlord who runs transitional homes for former addicts, homeless people and ex-cons.

Judge David Vaughan gave the green light for a class action lawsuit against Yuri Baumbilit's RYB Realty and the 10 "three-quarter houses" it operates in central Brooklyn and southeast Queens.

"We're suing to change the way they're doing business," said Tanya Kessler, a lawyer with MFY

Legal Services, which is representing the tenants.

"We're suing to compel them to follow the laws that apply to all other landlords in New York City that they've tried to evade by asserting that they're some kind of special program."

Kessler and tenants charged that Baumbilit runs three-quarter houses — family homes that are converted into residences that accept city housing vouchers — where tenants are harassed, evict-

ed without court orders and forced to go without heat.

"He should compensate us for all the torment we've been through since we've been here," said Nathaniel Shyne, 55, a tenant at 42 Christopher Ave. in Brownsville, where Baumbilit shut off the heat and removed the locks earlier this month.

Shyne, who was formerly incarcerated, heard about the Christopher Ave. house when he was at a shelter — and was told that after

completing a nine-month drug treatment program he would get a permanent home.

"They said you complete the program and you were guaranteed this and that but you graduate and you get nothing," said Shyne. "When they came to the shelters, they would sell this pitch about how great the three-quarter housing was but it's a ripoff."

Baumbilit's lawyer, Matthew Aboulafia, insisted his client was providing a social service by giv-

They're suing landlord of transitional homes

ing shelter and a second chance to people down on their luck.

He denied that tenants were ever harassed, noting 136 affidavits he filed from current tenants saying conditions were fine in the various homes in Brooklyn and Queens.

"We believe we do not harass them and harassment is illegal anyway," said Aboulafia.

In 2005, Baumbilit and his wife, Rimma, were charged with being the ringleaders of a multimillion-dollar medical fraud. Last June, Yuri pleaded guilty to money laundering and Rimma pleaded guilty to insurance fraud.