

Update

April 2017

On or about June 1, 2017 MFY will become
MOBILIZATION FOR JUSTICE.

MFY Launches New Taxpayer Assistance Project

 Low- income and working poor taxpayers who have disputes before the IRS have few places to go for legal help. Recognizing this gap in legal services, MFY has launched a new Taxpayer Assistance Project to provide assistance with tax audits and examinations; Earned Income Tax Credit appeals; liens and levies; employee/independent contractor disputes; injured spouse claims; innocent spouse relief requests; and identify theft. “Tax disputes often result in large liens, levies or the denial of refunds. For low-income New Yorkers, these penalties can prevent them from meeting other financial commitments, like rent or mortgage payments, which cause a host of civil legal issues,” said MFY Attorney Christopher Fasano, who is leading the project.

MFY’s Anti-Eviction Cases in the Bronx Up 300% Over Past Year

Over the past year, MFY Legal Services has tripled the number of Bronx tenants whose affordable housing it helps preserve. In 2016, MFY’s housing attorneys handled some 1,500 cases in Bronx Housing Court, and the numbers show no sign of abating. A March 2017 report by the Regional Plan Association found that 71% of the borough’s census tracks, with 355,420 households, are at risk of displacement. The vast majority of these households are low-income renters or families that pay an outsize share of their income on rent. “The Bronx is rapidly gentrifying and landlords are using every strong-arm tactic in the book to force out tenants,” said MFY housing supervisor Leah Goodridge. “But we have more than a dozen highly skilled and determined attorneys saving apartments every day in housing court,” she said.

Court Rules that Substance Abuse Counsellor Was Unfairly Dismissed

Darrell Dudley, who had worked as a substance abuse counselor at Rikers Island for eight years, was denied a security clearance after the City reviewed the backgrounds of 28 employees of a private contractor after two of the employees were involved in a contraband incident. Despite his good performance on the job, Dudley was denied a security clearance based on a decades-old misdemeanor conviction. MFY senior attorney Bernadette Jentsch represented Dudley, arguing that the Department of Corrections’ review process failed to consider all factors as required by law. The judge [agreed and ordered Dudley reinstated.](http://m.newyorklawjournal.com/#/article/1202784421338/Judge-Says-NYC-Security-Check-Resulted-in-Civilians-Unfair-Dismissal?_almReferrer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F)

MFY in the News . . .

The media continues to look at New York State’s attempts to thwart the landmark settlement allowing some 4,000 adult home residents with mental illness to move to supported housing in the community. Read the reports in [Pro Publica](https://www.propublica.org/article/federal-judge-sees-new-york-state-conspiracy-to-thwart-care-mentally-ill) and in the [New York Law Journal](http://www.newyorklawjournal.com/home/id%3D1202783892070/FingerPointing-in-Agreement-on-Housing-for-the-Mentally-Ill?mcode=1202617075062&curindex=2).

MFY Attorney Evan Denerstein speaks out on the [student loan crisis and legislation](http://www.marketwatch.com/story/new-york-lawmaker-looks-to-crack-down-on-student-loan-companies-2017-04-28) introduced in the NYS legislature to regulate student loan servicers.

MFY Supervising Attorney Justin LaMort comments on [landlords who illegally dispose of tenants’ property](http://www.villagevoice.com/news/no-landlords-cant-throw-out-all-your-stuff-just-because-you-have-bedbugs-9826598) during a bedbug extermination in this Village Voice article.