

Update

March 2016

MFY Asks Court to Appoint Administrator of Troubled Bushwick Building



[Tenants of 159 Suydam St. in Brooklyn](http://citylimits.org/2016/03/08/will-court-seize-control-of-this-troubled-brooklyn-building/), represented by MFY, are suing the landlord to obtain repairs of a host of unlivable conditions and asking the Court to appoint a 7A administrator to ensure that the building’s 166 open housing-code violations are corrected. At a press conference on March 3, 2016, shown here with Assemblywoman Maritza Davila, tenants described living with no cooking gas, blocked exits, crumbling plaster, multiple leaks and plywood in place of doors. The building’s previous owner was found guilty of having bribed two NYC Buildings Department inspectors to try to convince tenants that the building had been ordered fully vacated. The tenants did not fall for the scam, and one of the inspectors is now in prison.

Appeals Court Agrees with Advocates on Protecting SRO Tenants

On March 17, 2016, [the appeals court ruled in New York City’s favor](http://nypost.com/2016/03/17/sro-hotel-rentals-must-last-at-least-a-month-judges-rule/) in a case involving the 227-room Imperial Court Hotel in Manhattan, which had been renting rooms on a weekly basis to tourists and others. MFY and other advocates had submitted an amicus brief arguing that residential single room occupancy hotels (SROs) cannot rent rooms for less than 30 days, reinforcing the purpose of the Illegal Hotel Law, which was passed by the legislature to protect the safety of residents and the surrounding communities and preserve affordable housing. The ruling helps to preserve SROs as permanent, affordable housing for low-income New Yorkers.

MFY Secures Legal Status for Teen Threatened with Deportation

Abandoned by his mother in Guatemala, Angel Vasquez (center) made his way to the U.S. hoping to find his father. When he came to MFY at age 17, the U.S. government has commenced a removal proceeding to deport him. MFY Attorney Ernie Collette (right) petitioned family court to grant custody to Angel’s father (left), the predicate step to obtaining Special Immigrant Juvenile Status for Angel. MFY then successfully advocated for the termination of the removal proceeding. The two-year effort ended on March 17, 2016, when MFY obtained adjustment of Angel’s legal status so that he is now a Legal Permanent Resident.

MFY in the News . . .

Senior Staff Attorney Evan Denerstein commented on the unfair business practices employed by online colleges in an [article in The New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/17/nyregion/critics-assail-potential-new-york-move-on-regulating-online-colleges.html?_r=0). Advocates are urging the NYS education commissioner not to sign an interstate agreement that would expose students to harm.

[NY1 TV covered a spirited “Youth Court”](http://www.ny1.com/nyc/bronx/news/2016/03/3/teens-get-chance-to-voice-their-opinions-on-nycha-practice-that-could-impact-them.html) debate by more than 50 Bronx teens who live in public housing, organized by MFY and City Council Member Vanessa Gibson on March 2, 2016, to discuss the New York City Housing Authority’s (NYCHA) policy of evicting entire families if one household member is arrested for a drug-related offense.

MFY and the Cooper Square Committee’s efforts to restore essential services, including gas, heat and plumbing to a lower Manhattan building owned by Jared Kushner, publisher of the *New York Observer* and Donald Trump’s son-in-law, are detailed in an [article in The Villager](http://thevillager.com/2016/03/10/kushner-e-4th-tenants-without-gas-five-months/).