Kids Should be Kids

On December 8, Inner City Law Center, aided by a wonderful committee of volunteers, hosted a festive holiday party for over 100 children of our clients. As clients, staff, and volunteers listened to Christmas music and sipped hot chocolate, the children enjoyed face-painting and decorated Christmas cookies, ornaments, and holiday jewelry. Santa Claus entertained wishes from children and adults alike and read “Twas the night before Christmas.”

A volunteer photographer took holiday portraits of each family. After lunch, each family also received a basket full of clothing and toys selected just for them. Families also received grocery-store gift cards that will enable them to enjoy a holiday meal.

ICLC extends a heartfelt thank you to all the committee members, volunteers, and generous donors (listed here) who provided the food, drink, music, toys, crafts, clothing, and gift cards to make this holiday season so much brighter for our clients.

Your Contribution Will Change Lives!

These are tough economic times and the need for ICLC’s services has never been greater. In 2012, we added staff to meet the growing demand. Please click here to make an online contribution so we can continue ICLC’s life-changing work. Please do it now so that our staff of 40 (including 20 attorneys) can continue to more forward at full-strength providing free, high-quality legal representation to thousands of low-income tenants, working-poor families, immigrants, people who are homeless or disabled, and veterans.

Over the past year, ICLC:

- Arranged for homeless veterans to receive over $575,000 in retroactive VA disability benefits and over $350,000 in annual benefits, enabling these veterans to get off the streets and receive access to needed health services.
- Helped over 2,000 low-income tenants avoid homelessness and remain stably housed.
- Recovered more than $1.85 million in damages and relocation benefits from slumlords, helping families transition to safe and healthy homes.
- Obtained over $1.5 million in waived rent payments on behalf of clients challenging substandard living conditions and families seeking healthier housing.
- Provided legal services ranging from enrollment in public benefits programs to fighting discriminatory housing practices and maintaining stable, affordable housing to over 140 low-income people living with HIV or AIDS.
- Advocated for sensible, cost-effective public policies to aggressively address Southern
California's housing and homelessness challenges.

For more than thirty years, ICLC has represented homeless and low-income clients. On behalf of our entire Board of Directors, We pledge to you that with your support, ICLC will continue to challenge slumlords who prey on vulnerable low-income families, the VA bureaucracy when it wrongfully denies health care and financial assistance to disabled veterans, and private and public institutions that turn a blind eye to people who are homeless and most in need.

Thank you for considering this request and Happy Holidays to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Gary Blasi
UCLA School of Law

Justice Carlos R. Moreno (Ret.)
Irell & Manella LLP

Landlords Behaving Badly

When Rosa Hernandez, her husband John, and their four children moved into a two-bedroom apartment downtown with shared bath and kitchen facilities, they felt they had finally found a place to call home. For the next five years, they were model tenants - always paying their rent on time, maintaining their apartment, and building strong relationships with their neighbors.

Everything changed when their landlord died. The property was sold to a new owner who immediately, and illegally, raised the rents by 150%. He also notified the Hernandez family and their neighbors that they would now be responsible for paying their own utilities. Ms. Hernandez contacted the LA Housing Department, who investigated the matter and ordered the landlord to cancel the illegal rent increases and utility payment changes.

The landlord was not happy. He told the Hernandez family that he wanted all the tenants to leave, so that he could raise rents. Many families left. But when some stayed, the landlord fired the onsite property manager and refused to make any repairs or provide any maintenance at the building. When the Hernandez family still refused to leave their home, the landlord rented the two units that shared their bathroom and kitchen to known gang members. For five months, Ms. Hernandez feared for her family's safety as drug deals took place in their kitchen and in the common areas of the building. Whenever she complained to the landlord, she was told, "If you don't like it, then leave."

When she still refused to leave, the landlord sought to evict them from their home. That is when Ms. Hernandez came to ICLC for help. Our attorneys were easily able to defeat the eviction. We then filed an affirmative lawsuit against the landlord on behalf of the Hernandez family and 40 of their neighbors. The lawsuit is ongoing. But already we have forced the landlord to make substantial repairs to the property, the gang members have left the building, and the Hernandez family is looking forward to peacefully spending the holidays at home with one another.

About Inner City Law Center

Inner City Law Center is the preeminent housing and homelessness legal-services organization working on behalf of poor people in Southern California. As the only provider of legal services located on Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles, ICLC combats slum housing throughout Los Angeles and develops strategies to end homelessness.

Each year, ICLC's staff of 40 (including 20 attorneys) provides free, high-quality legal representation to thousands of low-income tenants, working-poor families, immigrants, people who are homeless or disabled, and veterans. Driven by the fundamental principle that every person should always be treated with dignity and respect, ICLC works for long-term, positive, and meaningful change.

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