January 6, 2017, BROOKLYN N.Y.— A family of three represented by Legal Services NYC’s Brooklyn program learned they would be allowed to keep their NYCHA apartment when their story landed them on the front cover of the New York Daily News. (“Fam Saved! NYCHA ends cruel fight to can good tenants”)

Brooklyn Legal Services client Lisette Vidal is a single mother of two children, ages 9 and 12. Her family got their apartment 15 years ago when her husband signed a “Resident Police Officer†lease, and her two daughters have lived in the apartment their entire lives.

Per NYCHA’s internal rules, once a police officer quits the force, NYCHA evicts not only the officer but the entire family. Ms. Vidal’s former husband quit the NYPD and left his family in late 2014. Ms. Vidal has paid rent consistently and lives peacefully with her daughters, but NYCHA refused to give her a lease or any sort of permit to continue residing in her home.

Given a choice between letting the family stay in their home or booting them into the shelter system at a cost to taxpayers of upwards of $3000 a month, the City was insisting on sending them into the system. In December a judge determined that, though "it mystifies the court that the city would choose to pay to house a family in shelter rather than in their home of 15 years, when they consistently pay rent and there is no allegation of nuisance behavior," she had no legal means of preventing the eviction.

That’s when LSNYC contacted Daily News reporter Greg Smith, who confronted NYCHA officials about the family’s situation. Though NYCHA at first insisted that the family had to go, by the end of the day they had reversed their position, saying that they would not move to evict.

"I'm left without words," Ms. Vidal told Smith. "I'm shaking right now. This is the best New Year’s gift we can ever have. My daughters will jump with excitement."

"We are thrilled that our client and her daughters will remain in their home of a decade-and-a-half,” said Luis Henriquez Carrero, Director of the Tenant Rights Coalition at LSNYC’s Brooklyn program, who represented the Vidal family. "NYCHA should always weigh in the human cost of its decision-making, not only when the public eye is upon it.”

Read the article on the NY Daily News website.

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