

The Bronx, NY (December 8) – This week, rent-stabilized tenants at 1187 Anderson Avenue joined tenants at 1230 Woodycrest in the Bronx in announcing a rent strike against their notorious landlord, Isaac Kassirer, demanding they fix hazardous living conditions that have gone unchecked for years, including rodents, roaches, mold, leaks, plumbing problems, inconsistent heat and hot water, and dysfunctional elevators. There are currently 169 HPD violations at 1187 Anderson Avenue. Tenants previously sued their landlord in May 2022 over the dangerous conditions and are now withholding rent until repairs are made. Tenants are being organized by New Settlements’ membership-driven tenant organizing project, Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), and represented by Bronx Legal Services’ Tenant Rights Coalition.

“Since the court case was filed in May, conditions have only worsened for tenants,” said **tenant leader Mercedes Escoto**. “I had an infestation of bedbugs in my apartment with my elderly mother and I couldn’t sleep in my room. This causes you to get depressed.”

“We have decided as a building that we will be withholding rent from the landlord because we will not be paying for something that is not to our living standards,” said **Samantha Diaz, longtime resident of 1187 Anderson**.

- **See pictures of dangerous living conditions [here](#).**
- **Read the lawsuit [here](#).**

The landlord has hidden behind shifting names in the past several years. The deed was signed by notorious real estate investor Isaac Kassirer, whose company was called Emerald Equity Group LLC; after bad press, the company scrubbed “Emerald” from its public presence. Gary Kassirer still remains associated with the management company, which has used the names Living Emerald, Living Residential, and Living Resi. Moshe Stahl, a landlord known from the Public Advocate’s Worst Landlords Watchlist, also claims to work for Living Emerald as the manager.

This week’s rent strike for repairs is not the first residents have taken against their landlord. Tenants previously defeated their landlord’s illegal attempt to remove their rent stabilization after tenants received notices from NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR), the state agency that regulates rent stabilized buildings in New York, informing them that their Isaac Kassirer of Emerald Equity Group filed an application with the agency to deregulate citing a J-51 tax credit following substantial rehabilitation back in the 1990s. J-51 is a loophole that allows for landlords to deregulate in certain situations in exchange for rehab work. Tenants believe the landlord’s application was an attempt to drive up rents to price them out, deny lease renewals, and push them out of their long-time homes to replace them with higher-paying tenants in the same vein as other neighborhoods that have been gentrified. Tenants organized to fight the application and won a decision denying the landlord’s application in February 2021. Read DHCR’s decisions [here](#).

Last winter, 1230 Woodycrest and 1187 Anderson tenants received shut off notices from Con Edison, because the landlord has neglected to pay the bills. Tenants held a rally on March 1st to demand the landlord pay their bills, and held a townhall with their elected officials on April 5th.

“While this lawsuit continues to slowly move through the court system, these tenants refuse to give up the fight. Today’s rent strike should send a clear message to the landlord: we will not stop fighting until they do the right thing,” said Eliza Schafner, supervising attorney at Bronx Legal Services’ Tenant Rights Coalition.

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ABOUT BRONX LEGAL SERVICES’ TENANT RIGHTS COALITION

Bronx Legal Services’ Tenant Rights Coalition, a program of Legal Services NYC, fights poverty and seeks racial, social, and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers. For 50 years, Bronx Legal Services has challenged systemic injustice and helped clients meet basic needs for housing, access to high-quality education, health care, family stability, and income and economic security. Legal Services NYC is the largest civil legal services provider in the country, with neighborhood-based offices across all five boroughs helping more than 110,000 New Yorkers annually. The work of Bronx Legal Services’ Tenant Rights Coalition is funded by NYC Human Resources Administration’s Anti-Harassment and Tenant Protection program.

ABOUT NEW SETTLEMENTS’ COMMUNITY ACTION FOR SAFE APARTMENTS (CASA)

Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA) is New Settlements’ housing organizing initiative. CASA is made up of community residents in our densely populated and underserved area of the Southwest Bronx who work together to build our knowledge and leadership to improve the living conditions in our neighborhood and maintain affordable housing through collective action. CASA’s multifaceted work combines building-specific tenant organizing, neighborhood-based campaigns, tenants’ rights workshops, legal clinics, monthly community meetings and a leadership development program. CASA also heavily participates in the work of other coalitions that advocate for legislation to preserve affordable housing and better protect tenants.