(Continued from front)

Sally's Story: "Sally," a senior with issues of hoarding in her home, reached out to the Legal Aid Society after the Rockland County Health Department brought a lawsuit to declare her home as uninhabitable. Once a noted photographer, Sally had some mental health issues that had kept her from maintaining her home. The Legal Aid Society worked with the Health Department, the Court, and, most importantly, Sally herself. We delayed the case to allow Sally to discard the clutter and get a new boiler and water pump—a gargantuan task involving multiple contractors and incredible odds. It took a year, but Sally succeeded—the Health Department declared the house acceptable and dropped the suit. Sally now continues to live in her cleaned-up home with her 14-year-old cat with heat, water, and a new outlook on life. ■

Susan's Story: Susan is the grandmother of two little girls. Their father murdered their mother in their presence, and then threatened to kill the girls if they told anyone. The girls did tell their grandmother what they witnessed and she contacted the authorities. She also brought the girls to the United States to protect them from their father and his gang. In order to gain legal guardianship of the girls, Susan had Legal Aid represent the children in court proceedings where she was awarded guardianship of them, and in which Orders of Protection against their father were entered. The attorney for the girls then filed a Petition for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status on their behalf. The petition was granted, and the children became eligible for normalization of their immigration status. Their father is now serving a lengthy sentence in a foreign prison. ■

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Legal Aid Society of Rockland County

Kevin's Story: "This week would make a year since the decision of physical custody has been made for my daughter 'Olivia' to reside with me. Even writing that brings tears to my eyes because I am immediately brought back to how hard it was to just be heard as a father. Throughout the process, I faced so many obstacles in and out of court, from explaining my story to people that just said "give up" to even court officials, not wanting to hear my plea for help in shedding light on what 'Olivia' was going through. I prayed, I cried and even gave up only to keep getting back up holding to the words my mother told me that 'someone will hear you, keep going,' and that someone was you.'Olivia' is now six years old and in first grade. She has been thriving and I am making sure that my daughters health and well-being are at the front of all decisions that are made. As a man, but even more important as 'Olivia's' dad, I could never have prayed for a better person to represent my daughter." ■

Elena's Story: "Elena," an actress, bought her Nyack house fifteen years ago and kept it while in L.A. to pursue her career. She fell behind on her mortgage when her tenant failed to pay rent. Elena moved back and connected with the Legal Aid Society at the foreclosure mediation to attempt a solution to save her home. When denied a loan modification for insufficient income, Elena thought "outside the box" and tried to find an investor to buy her house and let her rent it. The bank's attorneys tried to shut down the mediation when the loan modification was denied, but the Legal Aid Society convinced the court that Elena's plan was viable. The mediation continued until Elena found an investor—during the pandemic—who purchased the home and mortgage loan. Elena is now paying rent, living in her home, has the option to re-purchase the house in the future, and is free from the threat of foreclosure. ■

(More success stories on back)

"Your contribution makes a huge difference in the lives of so many Rockland families"

The Legal Aid Society of Rockland County has been helping individuals and families since 1966

3,039 Individuals Served†

Dear Neighbor,

It's been a challenging few years for all of us in Rockland County. Prior to the pandemic, more than 50,000 residents were eligible for assistance and need has only grown since the Spring of 2020. During this holiday season, I am asking for your help to prevent families from becoming homeless, or a senior from having their home foreclosed upon. We also work, day in and day out to ensure that the youngest among us have their voices heard in Family Court and receive the education they are legally entitled to.

Sincerely,

Alexander Bursztein, Executive Director

Please donate at:

LegalAidRockland.org

or mail your donation in the envelope provided

Thank You!

Prior to COVID-19, more than 50,000 individuals in Rockland County were eligible for services

1,407 Family Court Cases†

63% of LASRCs cases involve representation and advocacy of Children in Family Court‡

274 individuals received advocacy to restore or obtain Public Benefits*

1,108 individuals provided Tenant Advocacy*

1,991 Children Served*

More than 5,000 Children and Individuals served since the onset of the pandemic

789 individuals helped by Foreclosure Defense Unit*

*based on YTD through 11/2021 †since the pandemic began in 2020 ‡2019

Children's Rights

We help protect the rights of children by representing them in Rockland County Family Court in cases involving abuse and neglect, PINS, juvenile delinquency, custody and visitation. Our attorneys appear in over 1,700 matters each year in Family Court.

Housing

We offer representation to those facing eviction proceedings to ensure that their rights and, in all cases, their housing, is preserved. We also work hard to ensure that as many clients as possible retain their housing subsidy and we play a leading role in preventing homelessness.

Foreclosure Defense

Our attorneys provide free legal help to homeowners to stop foreclosure actions and to preserve the dream of homeownership for as many families and senior citizens as possible by filing defenses to foreclosure actions and requesting loan modifications from banks.

Public Benefits

Our attorneys and paralegals work to ensure that as many people as possible preserve or obtain the benefits that they are entitled to, ranging from SSI, Disability, Unemployment and Medicaid.