



Department of Justice

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Justice Department Settles Fair Housing Lawsuit Alleging Discrimination by Lancaster, Penn. Apartment Owner, Managing Agent Against Persons with Disabilities

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department today announced that the former owner and managing agent of the Barrcrest Manor Apartments in Lancaster, Pa., have agreed to pay up to \$60,500 to resolve a DOJ lawsuit alleging discrimination against persons with disabilities. According to the complaint, which was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the defendants refused to rent an apartment to a man who is visually impaired and uses a guide dog.

The lawsuit was a result of *Operation Home Sweet Home*. This fair housing testing program employs individuals who pose as renters for purposes of gathering information about possible discriminatory practices in the rental of apartments.

"I am pleased that the defendants have agreed to make reasonable accommodations for persons who use guide dogs," said Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "*Operation Home Sweet Home* has helped to ensure that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against in their search for a place to call home."

Under the agreement, subject to court approval, the defendants, National Properties Inc., NPI Management Corporation, Barrcrest Manor Associates, and the former apartment manager, Sandy Brown, will pay up to \$25,000 to compensate any victims of discrimination at Barrcrest Manor. They will also pay \$35,500 in civil penalties to the United States government, establish and follow non-discriminatory tenancy procedures, and undergo fair housing training.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. Since Jan. 1, 2001, the Civil Rights Division has filed 271 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, 125 of which have alleged discrimination based on disability. More information about the Civil Rights Division and *Operation Home Sweet Home* is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt>. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line 1-800-896-7743, e-mail the Justice Department at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

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