Our Inaugural Fundraiser raises $80,000 and our first fellow, Joey Michalakes, wins big for 59 families facing eviction!

The DAG Fund for Social Justice’s inaugural fundraiser this past September 2016 featuring keynote speaker, Senator Elizabeth Warren, was a wonderful success and helped us raise $80,000! Our goal is to grow our fund to $1 million dollars, so that we can achieve permanent endowment – we are currently at $430,000 nearly half way there! THANK YOU!

DAG Fund Fellow, Joseph (“Joey”) Michalakes, recently helped win a victory in the United States Bankruptcy Court that will secure 59 units of affordable housing in Dorchester and Mattapan, MA for a generation!

Joey, and a legal team – which included colleagues from Greater Boston Legal Services including Lauren Song, Hed Ehrlich, and Robert Sable, as well as pro bono attorneys from Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman and Jones Day – intervened in the court-supervised sale of numerous distressed properties previously owned by one of Boston’s most notorious landlords and successfully argued that the bankruptcy trustee should sell the buildings to a nonprofit purchaser committed to preserving them as affordable housing.

Highlighting that families – who would face displacement as a result of the sale – were living in squalid conditions, Joey and team brought $3 million in claims against the landlord’s bankruptcy estate which would be waived if and only if the estate sold the building to a nonprofit entity that would keep rents affordable. The strategy worked! In October 2016, a bankruptcy judge, ratified the trustee’s decision to sell the buildings to Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, which agreed to buy and refurbish the properties and keep them affordable for the next 50 years!

“This victory is amazing, not just for the precedent-setting result but also for what it shows about what’s possible when lawyers and advocates partner effectively with the community,” said Joey. “What happened in the courtroom was a direct result of the courage and resilience of these tenants, as well as the herculean efforts made by our friends at City Life to keep the tenants organized and develop the partnerships with other community organizations and state and local officials that were necessary to bring the nonprofit offer together.”

In successfully leveraging community partnerships, Joey is following in the footsteps of David Grossman, who during his lifetime worked with City Life/Vida Urbana to protect families, homes and neighborhoods from the ravages of the foreclosure crisis. As the challenge in inner-city Boston has evolved from foreclosure to gentrification, it is fitting that the effort to keep low-income Bostonians in their homes is being spearheaded by the DAG Fund’s inaugural fellow.

The DAG Fund for Social Justice, now more than ever, is committed to supporting public interest lawyers. We are grateful to you for your generous support and encourage you to visit our website to learn more: http://www.davidgrossmanfund.org/

GBLS Attorneys and Staff with DAG Fund Fellow, Joey Michalakes, are recognized by City Life/Vida Urbana for their role in a precedent-setting victory at the United States Bankruptcy Court that prevented the displacement of numerous CLVU members and will preserve their homes in Dorchester and Mattapan – 59 units in total – as affordable housing for a generation.