

Mediation satisfies owners, tenants

MBHP's mediation program is a free service in which staff experts work to settle disputes between landlords and tenants.

Kevin Donaher, director of customer relations, says the kind of cases most amenable to mediation include:

- ❖ Owner wants to evict for cause
- ❖ Continual late rent payments
- ❖ Lease violations that jeopardize the tenancy
- ❖ Personal problems between the owner and tenant
- ❖ Tenant refuses entry for inspection or repairs

Below are two successful mediations he has handled:

A landlord wanted to evict his tenant because she was allowing her twelve-year-old son to play in hallways unsupervised and was not paying her rent share on the first of the month.

During mediation, the tenant agreed to enroll her child in an after-school program and to properly supervise her son when at home. She also agreed to pay her share of the rent on or before the first of each month.

Since then, the child has continued in his after-school

program and the tenant's share of rent has been paid on time for almost a year.

Another case involved a young adult who entertained friends while her mother was at work, disturbing the property's other residents.

The young woman recently had ended an abusive relationship, and the owner had safety concerns because the tenants often left the common-area front door unlocked.

She was reluctant to evict, however, because the family had lived there for ten years.

During mediation, the tenant agreed to take out a restraining order on her daughter's former boyfriend.

They also agreed to keep the common front door locked, and that the daughter would have guests visit at reasonable times, when her mother was home.

The owner agreed to notify the family and police if the boyfriend was in the neighborhood, and to extend the lease if the tenant complied with the mediation. To date, all parties have kept to the agreement. ❖

Fall landlord workshops in Boston, Quincy, Revere

As summer comes to an end, AMBHP begins its fall program of free workshops. All workshops are 6 – 8 p.m.; flyers with details of the October and November workshops will be included in upcoming mailings.

Tuesday, September 10 – Section 8 Briefing, for current and prospective landlords, at Morgan Memorial Goodwill, 1010 Harrison Ave., Boston

Wednesday, September 25 – Lead Paint Laws: What you need to know, at 125 Armory St., Jamaica Plain

Quincy Workshops (location TBD):

October 8 – Section 8 Briefing for current and prospective landlords

October 22 – Energy Savings and Weatherization

Revere Workshops (location TBD):

November 5 – Section 8 Briefing, for current and prospective landlords

November 19 – Lead Paint Laws: What you need to know

The workshops are free but reservations are required: contact Amber Amado at 617-425-6704 or amber.amado@mbhp.org. ❖

We have moved ...

On Friday, August 23, MBHP moved into its new office at 125 Lincoln St., Boston. The new location, between South Station and Chinatown, is easily reached via the MBTA's Red, Orange, and Silver lines, as well as commuter rail.

The agency's switchboard numbers remain the same: 617-859-0400 and 800-272-0990 (Mass. only). Individual staff phone numbers and e-mail addresses are also the same. Our new fax number is 617-426-4256. Directions to our new office are available online, at www.mbhp.org.

Please note that on-street parking is quite limited in the new location. While the building itself contains a parking garage, MBHP does not have spaces available in it for staff or clients.

Our new office has several advantages for the organization: for the first time staff will be on one floor, we will have more space for tenant and landlord events, and we'll be accessible to Red Line clients.

The move involves the transfer of a hundred people, thousands of pages of paper and years of files. While we don't foresee any difficulties or interruption to customer service, please bear with us during the transition. And as always, we invite you to drop by and visit our Property Owner Education Center. ❖



MBHP has moved to the top floor of 125 Lincoln St., Boston

MBHP receives top score from HUD

Chief Program Officer Julia Kehoe reports that MBHP has received the highest possible score in its annual Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) audit.

"SEMAP measures all aspects of Section 8 program administration, such as waiting list selections, rent reasonableness, use of utility allowances, and housing quality audit inspections," she explains. "MBHP received the highest possible score on each of these measures."

MBHP's score was much higher this year than in the past because of a training and audit program developed and imple-

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SEMAP allows
HUD to
monitor and
improve the
nation's public
housing assistance
programs
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mented by Neil Rohr, who also runs the Section 8 briefings for landlords.

Kehoe also credits the staff of the Housing Consumer Education Center, Community Choice Voucher program, and the Scattered Site Emergency Family Shelter with the agency's success. Through their work, MBHP earned extra SEMAP "credit" by helping tenants find housing in low-poverty areas.

"Credit also, of course, goes to the landlords in these areas who provide our clients with housing," she adds.

MBHP sincerely thanks the property owners who have been part of this achievement. We look forward to creating more successes with you. ❖

MBHP media blitz targets Metro Boston

As part of its new marketing plan, MBHP has been popping up everywhere, from the Boston Globe to local cable channels.

The goal? To increase the number of property owners working with MBHP to provide safe, affordable housing, especially in low-poverty areas (see related story to the right).

MBHP's service area is roughly within the Route 128 belt, in towns as far flung as Burlington, Weymouth and Quincy. We also have tenants and landlords in Lynn.

You may have seen some of our public service announcements on your local cable access channel or in your local paper. According to owner outreach

specialist Erik Sundsted, the agency has received dozens of calls inquiring about our programs since the PSAs began running.

Erik is also the coordinator of the Landlord Advisory Committee, which works with MBHP staff to increase the number of landlords working with the agency. If you're interested in joining the committee, contact Erik Sundsted at 617-425-6711 or erik.sundsted@mbhp.org. ❖

Back to business (hours)

Since Labor Day has come and gone, MBHP has gone back to its regular business hours:

Monday – Friday, 8:45 – 5