

W I N T E R 2 0 2 6

NEWSLETTER



Client Stories:

- **A Home with Dignity:
How CMS Helped Vicky
Keep Her Safe Place**
- **Success Comes in
Different Forms: Justice
and a Job Opportunity**

CMS Clinics and Community Events

- **Virtual Worker's Know
Your Rights**
- **NYC Rent Freeze
Program**

Honoring David Colodny: A Legacy of Leadership and Justice

Dignity in Action

At Catholic Migration Services, we witness every day that justice takes many forms. Sometimes it is preventing an eviction and preserving a home. Sometimes it is restoring fairness in the workplace. Other times, it is educating workers and seniors so they can protect their rights. And sometimes it is honoring the leaders who have helped build this work from the ground up.

This season, we are proud to share stories that represent the heart of our mission: safeguarding dignity, stability, and opportunity for immigrant and low-income New Yorkers. From helping Katrina remain in her home, to securing fair treatment and employment for Lisa, to empowering dozens of workers and seniors through community education and legal clinics, our team continues to stand beside those facing uncertainty.

We also pause to recognize the extraordinary contributions of David Colodny, CMS' former Director of Legal Services and managing attorney of the Employment Team. David's leadership and commitment to justice have strengthened CMS and the communities we serve for nearly a decade, and we wish him luck as he moves on to a new role at Urban Justice Center.

These stories show us that success isn't solely measured in dollars or case outcomes — it is measured in dignity preserved, rights protected, and lives rebuilt.

A Home with Dignity: How CMS Helped Katrina Keep Her Safe Place

When Katrina first came to CMS in January 2025, she was facing the unimaginable — losing the one place that made her feel safe. She had severe injuries that kept her bedridden for two years, and continues to face serious health challenges to this day.

Despite her resilience, Katrina fell behind on rent while focusing on her recovery. When her landlord brought an eviction case against her, she came to CMS. CMS' Housing Team, and in particular, managing attorney Samantha Lyons, stepped in to provide full legal representation in housing court and worked closely with her to apply for a one-shot deal through HRA. This is an emergency grant provided by HRA to help tenants facing

unexpected financial crises. In October, her application was approved — nearly \$35,000 in rental arrears were paid directly to her landlord, ensuring that she could remain in her home.

For Katrina, this victory means more than just keeping a roof over her head. It's about security, stability, and dignity; it's the ability to heal in peace. She expressed her gratitude for her attorney: "I am so happy that God gave me Samantha and that she fought for me. [. . .] She fought tooth and nail for me."

Thanks to the dedication of our housing team, Katrina can continue her recovery without the fear of homelessness. At CMS, we believe that everyone deserves the chance to rebuild their lives with dignity and compassion.

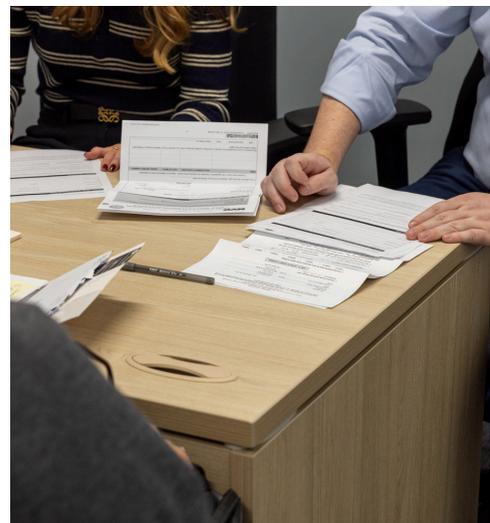
Success Comes in Different Forms: Justice and a Job Opportunity

Success isn't always measured in dollars recovered or settlements won. Sometimes, success looks like fairness restored, and a door reopened. Lisa applied for a position as a bus driver, eager for the opportunity to work. During the application process, she was asked to present proof of work authorization. Although Lisa had applied to renew her work permit, she had not yet received her new physical card. Under federal law, however, her application granted her a 540-day automatic extension of her employment authorization, and she provided official documentation to confirm this.

Despite the valid extension, the employer refused to accept her paperwork and insisted on seeing a physical work authorization card. Even after her CMS immigration attorney intervened and provided



Managing attorney Samantha Lyons (center) and members of the Housing team.



immigration attorney intervened and provided a letter explaining Lisa's lawful work authorization, the company continued to deny her employment, stating they would only reconsider once she could produce the physical card.

Our employment rights team lawyer stepped in to advocate on Lisa's behalf, explaining the law and her rights as a job applicant. As a result of this intervention, the employer reversed its decision and hired Lisa, even reducing her probationary period. While Lisa did not recover monetary damage, she gained something just as meaningful: fair treatment, dignity, and the job opportunity she deserved.

This case serves as a powerful reminder that success comes in many forms. For Lisa, success meant justice and the opportunity to provide for her family.

Community Events

Worker's Rights Program - Know Your Rights presentation for home health aides:



CMS attorney Aaron Bryce Lee

On November 4th, Catholic Migration Services Worker's Rights Program hosted a virtual Know Your Rights presentation for home health aides in partnership with the National Domestic Workers' Alliance. The event reached 68 workers and was led by attorney Aaron Bryce Lee, who provided critical information to help participants better understand, enforce and assert their workplace rights.

Participants learned about wages and overtime pay, 24-hour care, benefits such as sick and family leave, workers' compensation, and the difference in rights between employees and independent contractors. The presentation also addressed arbitration clauses and provided information on where to seek help and the documents needed to file complaints.

This event was one of the five educational workshops hosted by CMS in partnership with the National Domestic Worker's Alliance, advancing our shared commitment to empower and protect workers through education, advocacy and access to justice.

CMS Clinics



NYC Rent Freeze Program Clinic Volunteers

For many older New Yorkers living on a fixed income, even a small rent increase can threaten their ability to stay in their homes. The NYC Rent Freeze Program offers stability by exempting eligible tenants living in a rent-regulated apartment or hotel from future rent increases. On November 13th, CMS's housing team, in collaboration with New York Lawyers of Public Interest, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP and Morgan Stanley, hosted a clinic to assist elderly, low-income with applying or renewing their Rent Freeze Benefits. Thanks to the support of fourteen volunteers, we successfully helped thirteen clients complete and submit their applications.

Honoring David Colodny: A Legacy of Leadership and Justice

After nearly a decade of dedicated service, David Colodny, our esteemed managing attorney of the Employment Unit, will be moving on to new project with the Urban Justice Center.

Since joining CMS in 2016, David has been a passionate and tireless advocate for justice, leading numerous efforts to defend and empower low-wage workers whose rights have been violated. His unwavering commitment to fairness and dignity in the workplace has transformed the lives of many people.

Beyond his legal expertise, David has been a compassionate mentor, a thoughtful leader, and a trusted colleague. He has built a team grounded in empathy and collaboration. These values reflect his deep belief in justice and the power of community.

His longtime colleague Rebecca shared:

"The work that David has done at CMS, both on the workers' rights team and for the organization as a whole, is tremendous. As Legal Director, he guided the organization through the pandemic incredibly smoothly, making sure that CMS continued to operate and allowing us to serve our clients in a great time of need. He has a passion for advancing the rights of all immigrant workers like no other, making sure that all immigrant workers in NYC are treated with dignity and equality. David has also been a fantastic supervisor, coworker, and mentor to me, and the workers' rights team holds a great deal of respect and appreciation for him. His love for the organization and his unique sense of humor have made CMS a better place to work. I wish him only the best in the future."



David (center right) with co-counsel and clients, celebrating a recent settlement.

David's impact on CMS and the communities we serve has been immeasurable. We look forward to collaborating with him at his new project at the Urban Justice Center, which will focus on helping low-income creditors, particularly low-wage workers, recover money judgments from court cases. During his many years as an employment attorney, David observed that very often low-wage workers and other creditors prevail in court, but struggle to collect the money that the court determines that they are owed. David will be supporting legal services providers like CMS to help enforce these judgments.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to David for his years of service, leadership, mentorship, and many ways he has strengthened our mission. We wish him the very best in the next chapter of his journey.

Thank You to Our Partners

AIG
Harwood Lloyd LLP
Morgan Stanely
National Domestic Workers' Alliance
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

Support our work with a tax deductible donation!

A promotional poster for the 2026 Impact Reception. It features a background of blue and gold bokeh. The text includes the organization's name, logo, tagline, event title, date, time, location, and honorees.

CATHOLIC
MIGRATION
SERVICES

PROMOTING JUSTICE AND COMPASSION

Save the Date!

2026 IMPACT RECEPTION

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026 | 5:30 - 8:30 PM

The Malt House, 9 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038

Celebrating pro bono attorneys and community organizations whose dedication has made a lasting and meaningful impact on New York City's immigrant communities.

Our 2026 Impact Honorees:

*Latham & Watkins LLP
VIA, Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid
Lisa Arpaia, Pro-Bono Attorney*

For information, contact: Yomaira Rodriguez at yrodriguez@catholicmigration.org