



Housing Conservation Coordinators
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www.hcc-nyc.org

Living green by recycling at home



Weatherization Assistance Program

5 Ways to Toss \$\$ Out of Your Window

In your apartment, there are “small holes” leaking your dollars every day. Before you give up your daily coffee to foot your energy bills, look around to identify the sources of wasteful consumption of power. Alex Dilone, HCC’s energy auditor for the Weatherization Assistance Program, urges tenants to take action in their apartments:

■ **TV.** Today, a plasma or LED flat-TV screen guarantees a gargantuan energy bill. To keep your electricity bills low, turn down the brightness and contrast on your screen. Turn off the TV if nobody’s watching. This sounds obvious but most tenants don’t do it. Also, be aware that your cable box alone consumes over \$3/month.

■ **Cell Phones.** You’re losing money by leaving your charger plugged in when you’re not using your device. Unplug it!
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Organizing

Guardians against Illegal Hotel



This spring, business got a lot harder for illegal hotel operators. On May 1, a New York State bill went into effect that unambiguously made the conversion of residential apartments into hotel rooms for tourists staying less than 30 days illegal.

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Staying Cool during Scorching Weather



Turning on your air conditioner means inflating your energy bill. Here are tips to stay fresh while slicing your energy costs:

- Keep blinds, shades and curtains closed during steamy days.
- Turn off unnecessary lights [lights produce heat]. Unplug electronics not currently in use.
- Avoid using your oven and cook early in the morning or at night.
- Clean your AC’s filter every month. Replace filter annually.
- Keep the bathroom door closed when running your air conditioner: cool air can escape through vents. Also, close off rooms not in use.
- Take cold, short showers to keep fresh.
- Do not block your cooling unit with furniture or curtains.
- If you are a Con Edison residential customer who lives in a one-to-four family home in New York City and buys a new Energy Star air conditioner, you are eligible for a \$30 rebate through September 6, 2011 (until funds are depleted).*

Energy Star air conditioners are at least 10% more efficient than standard models and many include timers so you can use the least amount of energy needed to cool a room. For more info, visit www.coned.com/greenteam or call (877) 870-6118. * Limited to two rebates per customer.

■ Visit HCC’s **Weatherization Assistance Program’s** website to learn more about saving energy: www.hcc-nyc.org/weather ■

Legal

Fire in Your Home or Building? Call HCC!

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Energy Efficient

5 Ways to Toss \$\$ Out of Your Window

From First Page



■ **Computer.** Using your desktop computer four hours a day for a year will devour around \$55 in utility fees. To reduce your energy bill, turn off all power strips and unplug all equipment. Many appliances keep using energy even when they are not turned on. If you're not planning to use your computer for more than an hour-and-a-half, do not leave it in Screen-Save mode/Sleep mode because it will continue burning your dollars.

■ **Incandescent lights bulbs.** If you use five incandescent lightbulbs—100 watts each—for 10 hours daily, your electricity provider will charge you approximately \$30 per month.

If you replace those five traditional lightbulbs with CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Lights), your lighting costs will be reduced to approximately \$6/month.

■ **Refrigerator.** Properly storing your food in your refrigerator can save you money. Unwrapped food allows moisture to leak and makes your refrigerator work harder, which costs you more money. Also, if you're considering replacing your old refrigerator, choose the Energy Star-efficient label. A new Energy Star refrigerator can cost just \$43 per year to run, asserts Dilone. It's simple! ■

Guardians against Illegal Hotel

HCC received an Honorable Mention at ANHD's conference for its persistent and dedication to stop this attack on affordable housing



Illegal Hotels Community Forum at the Hartley House in May 2009.

From First Page

The illegal hotel bill passed in 2010 as the result of a five year campaign launched by HCC in collaboration with the West Side Neighborhood Alliance (WSNA), the West Side SRO Law Project and several elected officials. That the bill passed in Albany is no small achievement for HCC an Honorable Mention in Exemplary Community Organizing at the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development's Affordable Housing Conference, which was held on March 16 th.

Over the course of the campaign, numerous rallies, protests and town halls were organized, all receiving an exciting amount of media coverage.

The next battle for activists will be enforcement and in particular getting the City to increase fines for illegal hotel operators and reregulate lost apartments to rent regulated units.

HCC estimates that there are over 5,000 illegal hotels operating in New York City, mostly in core Manhattan. Tenants with illegal hotels in their buildings should call 311 to report illegal hotel activity.

Tenants should try and provide apartment numbers of the illegal rooms as well as the address of the building. To get involved in the campaign or to learn more about other West Side Neighborhood Alliance campaigns, please contact Matt Klein at (212) 956-2573 or mklein@hcc-nyc.org. ■

WSNA

Rent Law Battle



HCC would like to congratulate every WSNA member, Westsider and New Yorker who tirelessly worked on the Real Rent Reform Campaign—the fight for stronger rent laws. For the first time on over 30 years New York Rents Law were not only extended, but strengthened too.

Even though we were not able to end vacancy destabilization, we were able to increase the deregulation thresholds. The new thresholds have been raised, to \$2,500 from \$2,000 in monthly rent, and to \$200,000 from \$175,000 in annual household income (if the rent reaches \$2,500).

We were also able to lower the amount the landlord can charge a tenant for an individual apartment increase (in buildings with more than 35 units) from 1/40 to 1/60 of the total apartment renovation costs.

Additionally, landlords are now only eligible for a 20% vacancy bonus once as a year, as opposed to an unlimited amount previously.

Anyone who made phone calls, attended a rally, went to Albany, sent any emails or was in anyway involved in this campaign should be extremely proud of their contributions.

While we still have our work cut out for us to continue to strengthen the rent laws and expand protections to all NYC tenants, we must recognize and celebrate our accomplishments during this difficult political climate. Remember that your commitment and hard work is what ultimately go the rent laws renewed and strengthened. Congrats! ■

Legal

Fire in Your Home or Building? Call HCC!



■ The fire—which affected 12 families—was covered by the local media, including NY1News.

It's a relief to know that when you're forced to flee your apartment due to a fire or severe structural problems in your building, you can turn to HCC. Your rights as a tenant include the obligation of your landlord to repair the damage done to your apartment and the right to return to your apartment once it is safe and healthy enough for occupancy.

Most recently HCC worked with approximately 45 tenants occupying 12 apartments on West 180th Street. Twenty tenants—who live in 5 apartments—were forced to decamp their residences on March 26, 2011 due to a fire. Another seven residents' apartments had acute fire, smoke & water damage.

Know Your Rights!

HCC helped tenants file applications with the State's housing agency [the Division of Housing & Community Renewal] to compel the agency to reduce their monthly rents to \$1 because they had been "constructively evicted" from their apartments and could not physically live in them due to the fire's devastation and resulting health risks.

HCC also filed an HP Action in Housing Court on behalf of many of the tenants to have a judge issue an court order for necessary apartment repairs—and to cure violations to the communal areas of the building. As a result of the court order, five apartments—who were evacuated from their apartments—have prevailed in having their monthly rents reduced to a dollar temporarily by the DHCR. Further, the landlord has remedied three of the burned-out apartments whose tenants have since been restored to possession.

Aurora DeCarlo, HCC's Director of Legal Services, is representing these tenants and has filed a Motion to Punish for Contempt against the landlord for the two vacated apartments that have not been repaired as well as seven other apartments who have extracted only minor fire-damage repairs for in their apartments. To date tenants from three of the apartments have been restored to occupancy. Ms. DeCarlo continues to navigate augmented complaints from building tenants.

HCC's Tenant Organizer Bob Kalin sent Notice of Claim letters to the building's landlord spurring him to file claims with his insurance company to reimburse the 45 tenants for their personal possessions that were damaged or destroyed by the fire, smoke or water. ■

Clean your home without chemicals



Look for products made from plant-based ingredients such as citrus, herb and vegetable oils. Vinegar and baking soda are natural and effective cleaners. Use refillable spray bottles and buy concentrates instead of ready-to-use solutions. For more information visit www.nycgreenhouse.org and www.greenleaning.ny.gov. ■

**Fight for our
affordable housing...
... before it is too late**

Join us: www.westsidenyc.org

WEST SIDE
neighborhood alliance

HCC's Announcements

Every Monday

July	Free legal assistance for tenants <i>From 4:00pm – 6:30pm</i>
11	If you have housing problems, visit us during our intake hours. To qualify you must live between 34th & 72nd Streets, from 8th to 12th Avenues and meet our income guidelines (See chart below).
18	
25	
August	
1	Please bring all relevant documents (Leases, rent bills, proof of income).
8	
15	
22	
29	Free legal clinic <i>From 7:00pm – 9:00pm</i>
To attend, clients must call in advance to determine eligibility and reserve a spot. Those given a confirmed appointment will be seen on a first-come, first-serve basis. Please note: the Legal Clinic is limited to 8 people. Call HCC at (212) 541-5996 for further information.	
Sept.	
12	
19	
26	

Tuesdays

July	Free legal immigration services <i>From 5:00pm – 7:40pm</i>
12	We provide free legal information and possible representation. Appointments are required. You must live on the West Side of Manhattan between Canal Street and 110th Streets and be income eligible for our services. Spanish translation is provided. Please bring all relevant documents. Call us (212) 541-5996.
26	
August	
9	
23	
Sept	
6	
27	

Every Thursday

July	Free legal assistance for tenants <i>From 10:00am – 12:30pm</i>	
7	To qualify, you must live between 34th and 72nd Streets, from 8th to 12th Avenues and meet our income guidelines.	
14		
21		
28		
August		
5	<i>Household Size</i>	<i>Total Household Income Limit</i>
12	1	\$38,000
19	2	\$41,500
26	3	\$44,000
Sept	4	\$47,500
2	5	\$51,000
9		
16		
23		
30		

For more information, please visit us at 777 Tenth Avenue, at 52nd Street.

HCC's Mission

“ We are dedicated to advancing social and economic justice and fighting for the rights of poor, low-income and working individuals and families. With a primary focus on strengthening and preserving affordable housing. ”

Profile

Hell's Kitchen 311: Ask Pat Hooper

We congratulate Pat on her 31st Anniversary at HCC

Since 1980, Pat Hooper has played an important role in forwarding the mission of Housing Conservation Coordinators. As program coordinator for HCC's Boiler/Energy Conservation & Home Repairs classes, she was instrumental in developing a citywide training program for superintendents of tenant self-managed buildings.

HCC's boiler course was originally offered at no cost to low-income tenants to operate, maintain their heating systems to reduce energy costs. Later, the home-repair was added to provide tenants in fledgling co-ops with skills needed to address plumbing, electrical and plaster repairs as they struggled, literally, to keep roofs over their heads.

In 1978, Pat and her husband Enoch moved to Hell's Kitchen. The landlord of their building, faced with code violations and tax foreclosure, abandoned his property.

Consequently, ownership and management duties were transferred to the City of New York. The tenement was a physical wreck...the building's plumbing, electricity, roof, basement and structure were saddled with hefty code violations. HCC staff organizers helped to create a tenant association and advocated for repairs.

A Pioneer in Home Ownership

During the 80's, the City introduced the Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) program to train residents to effectively manage their buildings.

Encouraged by the prospect of permanent affordable housing and becoming a homeowner, Pat volunteered to help. Her induction into building management brought skills needed to resolve day-to-day tenant problems, oversee emergency repairs, and negotiate with contractors and city bureaucrats.

After successfully completing the TIL self-management program, tenants in her building seized the opportunity to purchase their apartments for \$250, becoming one of the first limited-equity HDFC co-ops in Hell's Kitchen.

Pat's building-management



experience proved essential in her work coordinating HCC's technical training programs. Pat began her career at HCC as coordinator of the neighborhood food co-op and later ran the technical training programs.

During that time she also worked with other staff on various projects, including assisting longtime former HCC staff member Nancy Kyriacou, who was appointed by the Court as an Administrator of severely neglected buildings where the conditions were a danger to the life, health and safety of tenants.

Pat also collaborated on HCC's Annual Appeal outreach and assisted in planning HCC fundraising events. Neighborhood residents may know Pat from her presence at HCC's Legal Clinic and Community Tax Clinic – always willing to take the time to find solutions and lend a helping hand. ■

Reuse and recycle this newsletter

After reading it, please give to your neighbor