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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Harmonia Shelter Residents to Mayor de Blasio: Don't Uproot us to Appease Upper West Side NIMBYists***

**(NEW YORK, NY) – Harmonia Shelter residents - along with The Legal Aid Society, UWS Open Hearts, and others** - called on Mayor Bill de Blasio to terminate his plans to remove residents from the Harmonia Shelter - a highly successful adult family facility that serves homeless New Yorkers, 80% of whom are disabled. Today's event follows a recent meeting Harmonia residents had with Marco A. Carrión, Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. At that meeting, City Hall refused to commit to the residents' demands and offered them few details concerning these looming transfers. According to multiple residents who attended the meeting, Carrión repeatedly reminded residents that he was "just the messenger" and that any final decision would be "up to the mayor" to make.

"Living at the Harmonia is leaving me and my wife very stressed and her anxiety level has skyrocketed not knowing when we will have to pack up and leave. I am demanding that Mayor De Blasio take this temporary freeze off and give the residents at the Harmonia an answer to what we want to hear, which is being able to stay at the Harmonia where we get the resources needed until being permanently placed," said **Mike Bonano, Harmonia Shelter resident**.

"The current situation at Harmonia is causing us great emotional distress at this time. Not knowing whether you'll have to pack up at any time is very stressful. And since my wife and I are so far along in the process of getting our apartment, we worry about having to start the process all over again if we are transferred. Although DHS states that our current progress won't be interrupted; we all know that they say one thing but do something completely different at times. We also hope that if we are transferred, they remember to place us someplace big enough to accommodate my emotional support pet and my home health aide," said **Shad Christie, Harmonia Shelter resident**.

“The residents of Harmonia Shelter have expressed a strong desire to stay at this facility, where they have access to services and other successful programming,” said **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “Mayor de Blasio continues to proclaim that his Administration prioritizes the needs of the city’s most vulnerable, but that purported commitment has been entirely absent throughout this self-made crisis. The Legal Aid Society urges Mayor de Blasio to abandon any potential transfer plans he has pending that would unnecessarily disrupt the lives of the residents of the Harmonia shelter as well the single adult men at the Lucerne, the single adult women at the LIC Plaza hotel, and the families with children at Flatlands.”

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.*

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