



# BAY AREA LEGAL AID PARTNERS IN JUSTICE E-NEWSLETTER

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### In This Issue

[BayLegal Client Escapes Domestic Violence](#)

[Fighting for Foreclosure Victims Rights](#)

[Article Headline](#)

### Featured Article



## BayLegal Client Escapes Domestic Violence

Alma came to the Bay Area from Venezuela in March of 2006 seeking a better life for herself and her 3 children.

By mid 2007 she had settled in San Francisco. With a job and a place to live, she soon began dating a man she met through work. The relationship however soon became abusive, and Alma eventually found herself one night in a dark secluded part of Oakland having been brutally beaten, strangled, and



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robbed by her boyfriend.

A passerby found Alma and brought her to a police station. The police helped her get medical attention, and criminal charges were brought against her abuser. Alma finally made contact with Bay Area Legal Aid and sought advice on how to obtain a restraining order from her abuser.

A BayLegal attorney also assisted Alma with the year-long process of attaining a U-Visa - a special permit giving legal status to immigrants who are victims of domestic violence. Today, Alma's abuser is awaiting trial, and there is a 5 year civil restraining order and a protective order against him, keeping Alma and her three children safe.

In 2009, BayLegal helped over 300 immigrant victims of domestic violence secure a permanent escape from abuse. By helping survivors obtain legal citizenship status and protections, and by empowering them with information and resources, BayLegal helps them to become safe, independent, and self-sufficient.

## Winning the Appeal For Tenants in Foreclosed Homes

In a major victory for California's innocent tenant victims of foreclosure, on May 25, 2010 the Appellate Division of Contra Costa County Superior Court reversed a trial court decision to evict a low-income single mother and her three school-age children from a foreclosed home they lawfully occupied.



With **Bay Area Legal Aid's Tenants After Foreclosure Project**, the displaced tenants appealed the faulty decision, arguing that the trial court had erred by holding that a 30-Day notice was sufficient basis for an eviction lawsuit, even though under the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA), tenants in foreclosed properties are entitled to a 90-day notice prior to commencement of an eviction lawsuit.

The Appellate Division recognized the errors of the trial court, reversed the decision, and ordered the trial court to dismiss the eviction lawsuit. This decision will help ensure that the rights of these often overlooked victims of the foreclosure crisis are enforced by our courts. This was a big win for the Project's Attorney Spencer Wilson for BayLegal and its clients.

an attorney, a law student or just want to help make a difference be sure and check our [Volunteers Page](#) for opportunities.

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