



Getting Their Lives

When six children lost their mother and their home, NAA members stepped forward. Back Together

BY LAUREN BOSTON

One day after burying their mother, the six Rosado children were evicted. Zuheily R. Rosado, a 32-year-old single-parent, was shot to death in February while working at a convenience store. Hours after the funeral, her children were forced out of their Jacksonville, Fla., apartment and into a one-bedroom unit with their grandparents.

In addition to living in extremely cramped quarters, 16-year-old Teysha lost her part-time job because she missed work to take care of her five younger siblings, the youngest of whom is 18 months old. With the murderer at large, school administrators also deemed that the children (four girls, two boys) were a “security threat” and prohibited them from returning to class.

Struggling to make ends meet, the family needed clothing, beds, furnishings, food, schooling and a safe and affordable place to live. Fortunately, several apartment industry professionals heard about the story and accepted the challenge.

It began when Jacksonville, Fla.-based NAA member Lysa Telzer learned of the Rosado’s and contacted Peggy Queen, Executive Vice President of the First Coast Apartment Association (FCAA). She donated a gift card on behalf of FCAA and passed the story on to Chip Tatum, Executive Vice President of the Apartment Association of Greater Orlando. Tatum, who also donated money to the family, knew just the woman to call: Lori Trainer.

The Vice President of Public Relations for Southern Affordable Services, Trainer, CAM, CAPS, has helped 175 struggling families in just two years through the New Moves Partnership. The story of the Rosado children was especially heart-wrenching, though.

“I get referrals for people in varying degrees of need every day, but nothing this tragic,” she says. “Everything that could have possibly gone wrong for these kids did.”

Determined to help, Trainer found a four-bedroom apartment an hour and a half away that was large enough for all eight



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—Aimee Arrington, Public Affairs Specialist
Houston Apartment Association

family members. The management company waived the application fee and deposit, as well as the first month and a half of rent. A local charity agreed to pay the following month’s rent.

Trainer says Teysha was amazed when she saw the new apartment. “She kept going on and on about how beautiful it was, and the fact that there was a pool and a fitness center and a playground for her younger siblings,” Trainer says. “At one point, Teysha said, ‘It’s so unbelievable—it looks like a mansion.’”

Trainer says the deceased mother’s death benefits have since taken effect and are available, empowering the family members to get back on their feet and pay their June rent—and each month going forward—on their own.

Thanks to donations from other industry members and organizations such as The Justice Coalition, Trainer was also able to provide the family with kitchen supplies and a moving truck rental at a discounted rate. A local store, Thrift Mart, generously opened its doors to all six children who shopped for clothes and shoes for free.

Additionally, CORT has supplied beds and home goods for the entire family and Appliance Warehouse has provided them with a free washer and dryer for one year.

“Within 24 hours of hearing about this family, Lori already had an apartment and furniture for them,” Tatum says. “I take for granted her God-given ability to help people who are at their most vulnerable.”

The ‘Family’ in Multifamily

Trainer was in Washington, D.C., for the 2013 NAA Capitol Conference when she got a call from the Rosado’s case manager. Despite all of the donations, no one remembered the \$300 deposit for the apartment’s gas bill. Without the money, the family had spent their first few days in the apartment without hot water.

At a social event that evening, an NAA member overheard

Helping Hand

If you are interested in helping the Rosado family, Trainer says gift cards are the best form of donation. A Family Gift Box, which costs \$120 and includes items such as bath towels, shampoo, pots and pans and a broom, is also appreciated and is tax-deductible. Contact Lori Trainer at ltrainer@sashousing.org.



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Trainer telling someone she needed money for the gas deposit. The man walked up to her, handed her a \$100 bill and asked her to use it for the children.

The generosity didn't stop there.

After hearing the story, NAA members Rob Johansen, Owner of Robertsdale, Ala.-based Get a Grip Florabama LLC, and independent rental owner Brian Chase, President of Richmond, Va.-based Landmark Property Services Inc., gave Trainer cash donations. Another conference attendee donated the \$50 CORT gift card he won at the Association Executives meeting earlier that day.

"We as a community, as a people, have an obligation of sorts to reach out to those in need," Johansen says. "These six young lives needed help. There was no better opportunity then at that moment to extend a helping hand."

Aimee Arrington, Public Affairs Specialist for the Houston Apartment Association, was so moved by the Rosado's plight that she promptly sent Trainer money through PayPal during the Better Government Fund (BGF) event.

"I've come to realize that the people in our industry are used to providing homes to our renters," Arrington says. "They don't just see them on good days or when something is needed, but they live alongside their residents day-in and day-out. They feel the joy of new additions to families and the pain of deaths of longtime residents; they see the big job promotions and the layoffs. I think the proximity just makes apartment industry professionals more likely to care about the communities around them and more apt to find a way to help when a need presents itself."

Trainer says she is incredibly touched by the industry's support.

"So much was accomplished during a few short days at the Capitol Conference," Trainer says. "In 24 hours, I had over \$300—more than I even needed for the gas deposit. It's really inspiring to see people come out of the woodwork—people I had only casually met—to help others in need. I love this industry."

Arrington says she couldn't possibly keep her wallet closed.

"Lori's discernment about families in need made me feel confident that my money was going to help a family that truly needed it," she says.

"I also think of my own family and the million ways that others regularly help us in big and small ways. Though we haven't suffered tragedy on the scale that this family did, we certainly are blessed to have support from family and friends. I feel lucky that God gives me opportunities to share my own good fortune with others, even in small ways like providing a little financial assistance."

Such assistance has gone a long way for the Rosado children. "After the family moved in Teysha said, 'It feels so good to go to sleep at night and feel safe,'" Trainer says. **NAA**

Lauren Boston is NAA's Staff Writer. She can be reached at lauren@naahq.org or 703/797-0678.

Read more about New Moves in NAA's 2012 Annual Report: bit.ly/2012MoralSupport

