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**Media Contact:**  
Mariah C. Thompson, Attorney  
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.  
[mthompson@crla.org](mailto:mthompson@crla.org)  
(559)441-8721

**FRESNO COUNTY MOBILE HOME PARK RESIDENTS FILE LAWSUIT  
AGAINST PREDATORY CORPORATE OWNERS**

*Case highlights laws protecting mobile home park residents' access to affordable housing*

**Fresno County, California-** A group of mobile home park residents in Fresno County have filed a lawsuit to stop the ongoing predatory and inequitable actions of an out-of-town corporation that recently purchased their mobile home park.

El Grupo Comunitario de San Miguel Cuevas (El Grupo Comunitario) is an unincorporated resident association that primarily represents low-wage farmworker families residing in Shady Lakes Mobile Home Park, a small mobile home community located approximately one mile south of Malaga in Fresno County.

Members of El Grupo Comunitario own their homes and have lived in the park for years or decades renting the space where their home is located. The park has been an affordable option for the families and has provided them with the stability of home ownership as well as a tight-knit community.

Harmony Communities, Inc., (Harmony) a Stockton-based corporation that operates more than twenty mobile home parks throughout California and Oregon, took over Shady Lakes in April 2018. Harmony immediately raised space rent by \$130.00—a 32% increase that made rents unaffordable to families living in the park. While Harmony increased rent, they failed to fix an issue with the on-site wastewater system, forcing residents to pay higher rent while suffering with the overwhelming smell of sewage.

Harmony also implemented oppressive, unreasonable rules in the park. Residents are prohibited from having anything outside of their home except barbeques, patio furniture, and bicycles. Harmony chooses the color residents can paint their houses, the material, color, and height of their fences, and where air conditioners can be installed.

“My parents, who have lived at the park for many years, are elderly farmworkers...[they] leave their shoes and clothing outside in order to avoid pesticide exposure inside of our home. The new rules don't take this into consideration,” one resident noted, adding “They are also on a fixed

Social Security income. With the rise in the rent, there is worry that they may not be able to make rent.”

Harmony has issued eviction notices to residents for having Christmas lights up, having boots or doormats on the porch, having children’s toys or brooms outside, and for other normal uses of one’s home. The eviction notices state that residents may lose their home if they are evicted. Residents who oppose these rules have been harassed and threatened by Harmony’s staff.

El Grupo Comunitario retained California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) to represent them in their legal case against Harmony Communities and filed a lawsuit against Harmony Communities in Fresno County Superior Court in December 2019.

Through their lawsuit, El Grupo Comunitario seeks reasonable rents, better living conditions and security in the park, and a stop to the harassment, discrimination, and intimidation of residents. Many of Harmony’s actions violate California’s laws protecting mobile home park residents and provide for thousands of dollars in penalties against bad actor park owners for each violation.

The complaint outlines the unlawful behavior Harmony Communities uses to control and intimidate families living in the Park and alleges that Harmony Communities is in violation of state and federal laws including the Fair Housing Act, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Unfair Competition Law, the Business and Professions Code, and the Mobile Home Residency Law.

El Grupo Comunitario has stood up for the rights and dignity of the families in Shady Lakes and has refused to let a corporate out-of-town landlord bully them and force them out of their homes.

Full complaint filed with Superior Court of California available at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/shadylakes>

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