

DAILY NEWS

The Front Page

Slam door on hope

Co-op offers unwelcome mat to Holocaust survivor

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He survived the Holocaust and a crippling bout with Parkinson's disease.

Now an 81-year-old Brooklyn man is being forced to do battle with a snobby co-op board that won't let him live out his last days in a little luxury.

Chaim Indig - who can't speak and must use a wheelchair - has filed suit against Premier House in Midwood, charging he's being kept out because of his disability.

His outraged family says he deserves a break after all the hardship in his life: the horrors of Auschwitz, a work-related accident that ended his cooking career, the rigors of Parkinson's.

"My father was not expected to live - but he's a fighter, my father," said Indig's daughter, Shevie Sinensky.



Tracy for NEWS

Chaim Indig was denied co-op apartment in Midwood, Brooklyn, based on his disability, lawsuit claims. Board says his Section 8 subsidy is reason.

Sinensky's husband, Gary, had signed a \$301,000 contract to buy an eighth-floor flat for Indig and his wife, Sara, in the Ocean Ave. high-rise - considered one of Midwood's best buildings.

The Sinenskys were hoping to get him out of his Borough Park rental, where the 10 steps leading to the front door have left him a virtual prisoner since last year.

Indig, who has to be fed through a tube, hasn't been able to leave the little brick house - except on a stretcher carried by two men - since his health took a turn for the worse last year.

But at Premier House, the Sinenskys found the answer to their prayers: a wheelchair-accessible elevator building that's close to the home of another daughter.

The apartment they had their eye on had an accessible shower, so the elderly man would no longer have to be bathed in bed.

There was a terrace so he could get sun and fresh air on nice days, and an Orthodox synagogue in the 185-unit building.

There was only one problem.

Seven members of the co-op board - which must approve all sales - unanimously rejected the deal last month.

And just days after the board put the kibosh on Indig's dreams, one of its members, Solomon Rokowsky, snatched up the apartment for himself, the lawsuit charges.

Rokowsky claims the board's decision had nothing to do with Indig's medical condition.

He insists the board turned down Gary Sinensky because he was going to collect the Section 8 rental subsidy that Indig's landlord now gets for the apartment.

"The board doesn't want Premier House to become known as a building that allows Section 8," said Rokowsky's lawyer, Lawrence DiGiovanna.

Shevie Sinensky confirmed her father does get Section 8 federal government rent-subsidy benefits, because his only income is Social Security.

But she insisted she and her husband are happy to pick up the whole tab for the Premier House apartment - and that the board's excuse is a smoke screen.

"It's a pretext to cover up discrimination," she said.

The lawsuit, filed in Brooklyn Supreme Court by the Indigs and their son-in-law, asks the court to stop the sale of the apartment to Rokowsky and allow them to buy it.

And unlike many real estate suits, this has little to do with money - and more to do with a daughter's love for her dad, said the Indigs' lawyer, Adam Bailey.

"His daughter wants to give him an apartment that allows him to live out his twilight years in comfort," he said.

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