

Johnson's families receive final payment from Mountaire

The 28 families from Johnson's Mobile Home Park moved out by the agreed deadline of July 31 and received their final compensation from Mountaire Farms.

Tuesday, July 31, was the last day for Johnson's Mobile Home Park in Siler City that was home for over 60 adults and 50 children, the majority of whom were Hispanic. Mountaire Farms evicted the 28 families after purchasing the property to expand their new chicken processing plant. Twenty-seven of the 28 families owned their mobile homes. All the residents moved out by the agreed deadline of July 31 and recently received their final compensation check.

Twenty-one families found places to live in Chatham County, seven moved to Randolph County. Three families moved their mobile homes, seven purchased used mobile homes, one purchased a home, and 17 are renting houses or mobile homes.

Since August 2017, The Hispanic Liaison hosted dozens of meetings with the Hispanic residents to help them articulate their needs, understand their rights, and negotiate with Mountaire Farms for compensation for their losses and relocation expenses. In March, following public meetings with town and county commissioners, the residents secured a settlement that included 9 months of rent abatement, an extended move out date to July 31 (the original eviction date was May 7), and \$8,300 in financial compensation, totaling \$10,190 in benefit to each of the 28 families.

Jorge, a resident and father of four said, "I'm grateful to The Hispanic Liaison for helping us come together as a community. By standing united, we were

able to face a powerful corporation and secure a fair compensation for our families. This was a great example for our children that we can and should stand up for our rights”.

Ilana Dubester, Executive Director of The Hispanic Liaison stated, “We are honored to have stood with the residents to seek a just compensation for their losses. They stood united for over 8 months and it took a lot of courage and tenacity to face a multi-million dollar corporation. This agreement was only possible because of their resolve to organize and the company’s willingness to negotiate.”

With financial support from Chatham County, The Hispanic Liaison was able to help the families look for housing, advise on rental and purchase contracts, secure permits for moving mobile homes, organize volunteers to help residents move and more. The Liaison was also responsible for disbursing the checks to each family, which were issued in three installments.

“We are incredibly thankful for the community support for the residents’ cause, in particular, the attorneys from the NC Justice Center who worked very hard on our behalf. We are grateful to Mark Reif, Community Relations Manager for Mountaire Farms, who was kind and respectful throughout the entire negotiation process. It is a great relief that the families found places to live and to have this crisis behind us”, said Dubester.

Background:

In November 2017, Mountaire Farms purchased Johnson’s Mobile Home Park, which is adjacent to their new plant. Mountaire mailed an eviction notice to the residents giving them until May 7, 2018 to move out without offering any compensation for the residents’ losses. Johnson’s housed 28 mobile homes, 27

residents owned their homes and invested an average of \$10,000 per family in the purchase and repairs. The eviction placed these low-income families in a dire situation. After months of negotiations with Mountaire, press conferences and presentations to town and county commissioners, the residents reached a settlement worth \$10,190 per family.

The Hispanic Liaison/El Vínculo Hispano is a 23-year-old advocacy and direct services organization that serves Chatham, Lee, Alemance and Randolph counties. Its mission is to foster intercultural understanding and to empower Hispanics to overcome the challenges they face and make their voices heard in the community. For more information call 919.742.1448 or visit www.hispanicliaison.org