



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

ROSE GILL HEARN  
COMMISSIONER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**EIGHT PRESENT AND TWO FORMER NYC DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EMPLOYEES  
ARRESTED THIS WEEK FOR DEFRAUDING  
THE NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY OF OVER \$235,000**

**- Principal, Teacher, Paraprofessionals, School Aides charged with fraud-**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the arrest of eight current and two former New York City Department of Education (DOE) employees for defrauding the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) of approximately \$235,755 in housing subsidies. Many of these individuals were charged with allegedly concealing their DOE employment and income from NYCHA in order to avoid paying higher monthly rental payments for their low-income NYCHA apartments. One of the defendants, a Public School Principal, allegedly neglected to notify NYCHA that she moved into a private residence she purchased in Long Island while subletting her NYCHA apartment to the tenants of her choosing.

NOREEN LITTLE, MIRIAM RAMOS, ANA MUNOZ, PENNY MAYS, PAT BLAND, JANET MCQUIRTER, SUSANNE HILLS, DOROTHEA CHOICE, JOANNA CYRUS and EVELYN OGLETREE, have been charged with various Grand Larceny and False Filing related felonies by District Attorneys' Offices in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. Depending on the charges, they face up to four to 15 years in prison.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "It's shameful that these defendants who serve as role models to our City schoolchildren chose to commit fraud in order to obtain housing subsidies they were not entitled too. These defendants' actions deprived truly needy low-income families of the opportunity to obtain low-income housing."

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, "With so many New Yorkers on long waiting lists for affordable housing, the City cannot be misled into providing subsidized apartments to those who can afford to live elsewhere -- and, in some cases even do, such as the Queens school principal who allegedly sublet her NYCHA apartment to an unauthorized tenant for nearly two years. Such fraud cannot be tolerated and those who improperly take advantage of the City must now face the consequences of their actions."

Many of these arrests resulted from NYCHA's newly granted access to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's "Enterprise Income Verification" system which enables NYCHA to identify income not being reported by tenants.

NOREEN LITTLE, 55, a DOE Principal at Public School 156 in Queens, has been a NYCHA tenant in a Federal Housing Administration Acquired Homes Unit house located in the St. Albans section of Queens. In October 2003, LITTLE, who earns approximately \$105,000 a year as a DOE Principal, purchased a modest home in Hempstead, Long Island. Instead of informing NYCHA that she moved into her Long Island residence, LITTLE submitted documents to NYCHA indicating that she was still residing in the house. As a result, for approximately two years, LITTLE was able to sublet the subsidized house to the tenants of her choice instead of affording NYCHA the opportunity to offer the subsidized house to one of the needy and deserving families who have been waiting for years for NYCHA housing.

MIRIAM RAMOS, 52, tenant of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Lehman Village located in the Spanish Harlem section of Manhattan, since 1977, allegedly concealed from NYCHA the fact that she has been employed with DOE, under her maiden name MIRIAM VIERA, since at least 1975. On Affidavits of Income RAMOS submitted to NYCHA from 1991 through 2004, RAMOS

listed child support of between \$500-\$650 per month as her sole source of income. As a result of RAMOS' misrepresentations, she paid monthly rent ranging from \$138 to \$224. RAMOS, however, earned between \$14,926 and \$37,583 a year, during that time, from her employment with DOE where she works as a Paraprofessional. Based on her income, RAMOS should have paid rent at a rate ranging from \$495 to \$509 per month. As a result of RAMOS' actions, NYCHA overpaid rental subsidies on RAMOS' behalf totaling \$52,016.

ANA MUNOZ, 62, has been a tenant of a 5-room apartment in NYCHA's Murphy Private Consolidated in the Tremont section of the Bronx since 1972. MUNOZ allegedly obtained \$36,972 in unwarranted rent subsidies from 1994 through 2004 by failing to report her employment with the DOE on her yearly Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA. MUNOZ, as a School Aide with DOE, earned approximately \$13,947 to \$17,735 a year from 1994 until her retirement in September 2003. MUNOZ, however, failed to report this income and, instead, reported only her husband's employment, social security, or the earnings of her children as her sole household income. As a result, MUNOZ' rent payments ranged from \$92-\$553 a month when she should have been paying maximum rent of \$619 per month for an apartment of that size.

PENNY MAYS, 43, has been the Tenant of Record in NYCHA's Marcy Houses, located in the Clinton Hill section of Brooklyn, since 1993. On her Affidavits of Income she filed with NYCHA from 1993 through 2003, MAYS lists herself and her children as the sole occupants of the apartment. DOI Investigator's determined, however, that Edward Lewis, MAYS' husband since 1989 and an employee of NYCHA since 1989, has been residing in the NYCHA apartment. MAYS concealed this fact from NYCHA. In addition, DOI's investigation found that in May 2003, MAYS and her husband jointly purchased a home in Springfield Gardens, Queens, in which they resided, but MAYS failed to disclose this to NYCHA so she could sublet her NYCHA apartment. In August 2004, MAYS eventually turned in the keys to her NYCHA Apartment and falsely informed the Management Office that she was relocating to North Carolina. As a result of MAYS' actions, MAYS defrauded NYCHA of \$36,034. MAYS has been a School Aide with DOE under her married name "LEWIS" since 1999. Mays also previously worked for NYCHA as Seasonal Aide.

PAT BLAND, 44, Tenant of Record of a 4-room apartment in NYCHA's Unity Plaza located in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, has been charged with unlawfully obtaining \$30,230 in unwarranted rent subsidies. From approximately May 1998 through March 2005, BLAND, on her yearly Affidavits of Income, reported that her sole source of income consists of minimal income she earned as an employee of a local day-care center. As a result, BLAND paid rent at a rate of \$53 a month to \$190 a month. BLAND, however, earned between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a year from her employment as a Paraprofessional with the DOE. Based on BLAND's DOE income, BLAND should have paid \$495 a month during that time period, maximum rent for an apartment that size.

JANET MCQUIRTER, 56, has been the Tenant of Record of a 4-room apartment at NYCHA's Astoria Houses in Queens, since 1982. MCQUIRTER allegedly concealed from NYCHA the fact that she has been employed with the DOE as a Lunch Aide since November 1997, earning between \$18,492 to \$22,751 a year. Instead, on her yearly income documents submitted to NYCHA, MCQUIRTER only reported her part-time employment with HANAC Inc. where she works as an "After School Program Director" earning between \$3,000 and \$5,000 a year. As a result of MCQUIRTER's actions, her rent ranged from \$117 to \$224 a month when she should have been paying maximum rent of \$495 a month for an apartment of that size. MCQUIRTER defrauded NYCHA of approximately \$26,757 in rental subsidies during the period of May 1998 through June 2005.

SUSANNE HILLS, 41, a tenant of a 4-room apartment located at NYCHA's Hammel Houses in the Rockaway Beach section of Queens since 1995, is alleged to have concealed her DOE employment from NYCHA causing NYCHA to be defrauded of \$17,933 in rental subsidies from February 2001 through May 2005. Although HILLS has been employed as a Paraprofessional with the DOE since December 2000, earning between \$16,585 and \$24,671 per year, HILLS reported only Public Assistance or minimal employment income with the YMCA during that time period. HILLS' concealment of her DOE income caused NYCHA to charge her between \$137 and \$171/month rent, rather than the \$495 maximum monthly rent that she should have paid.

DOROTHEA CHOICE, 67, has been the Tenant of Record of a 5-room apartment located at NYCHA's LaGuardia Houses in the Two Bridges section of Manhattan since 1957. CHOICE is alleged to have unlawfully obtained \$15,984 in rent subsidies by failing to report to NYCHA that she has been employed as a School Aide with the DOE since October 1999. Although CHOICE was employed at DOE's Graphic Communication Arts from 1999 to 2006 earning between \$15,727 and \$23,260 a year, she reported to NYCHA that her sole income consisted of her receipt of Social Security benefits. As a result, CHOICE's monthly rent payments ranged from \$275 to \$299, when she should have been paying \$619, maximum rent for an apartment of that size.

JOANNA CYRUS, 36, has been a tenant of a 5-room apartment located at NYCHA's Baychester Houses in the Edenwald section of the Bronx since 1994. On Affidavits filed with NYCHA during the years 2001 through 2004, CYRUS reported that her only income was \$159/weekly in Workers Compensation, or earnings received from babysitting. DOI's investigation found, however, that, since April 27, 2000, CYRUS has been employed by DOE, first as a Paraprofessional, but since September 2004, as a full-time Teacher. CYRUS earned between \$12,549 and \$37,133 a year from her employment with DOE. As a result of CYRUS' failure to report her DOE income, CYRUS paid rent ranging from \$132 to \$174, when CYRUS should have paid the maximum rent of \$619 during that time period. Therefore, CYRUS' actions caused NYCHA to be defrauded of \$14,214 in rent subsidies from November 2001 through April 2005.

EVELYN OGLETREE, 57, Tenant of Record at NYCHA's Bland Houses located in the Flushing section of Queens, is charged with unlawfully obtaining \$5,615 in rental subsidies from approximately 1997 to 2005. OGLETREE failed to report to NYCHA the income she earned as a School Aide with the DOE since July 1997, as well as the Social Security Survivors benefits she

received. Instead, on Affidavits submitted to NYCHA, OGLETREE listed herself as being “retired” from Verizon, with a pension as her only income. As a result of OGLETREE’s conduct, NYCHA undercharged OGLETREE monthly rent when she was charged between \$418 and \$430 a month. She should have been paying rent ranging from \$449 to \$495 a month. OGLETREE serves as the President of the Bland Houses Tenants’ Association.

These arrests are part of an ongoing City-wide crackdown by DOI and New York area prosecutors that have resulted since 1995 in the arrest of 422 residents, including 136 City, State, and Federal employees, who were charged with stealing more than \$8.4 million in rent and welfare subsidies by hiding their income and assets from the City. So far, 326 cases have resulted in convictions and over \$4.6 million in restitution. Since 2006, 13 individuals have been arrested for illegally receiving over \$298,740 in government housing benefits.

These investigations were conducted by NYCHA Inspector General Judith F. Abruzzo and members of her staff, including Deputy Inspectors General Kevin Smith, Ralph Iannuzzi and Bergia Telesford, Assistant Inspectors General Rosemary Caruso, Anthony Capek and James Hylton, Special Investigators Patricia Carvajal, John Reatz, Lou Vega and Christopher France, Confidential Investigators Alexandra Hampton and J. Graham Forbes and Assistant Counsel Lauren Hintz.

The Office of Robert M. Morgenthau, District Attorney, New York County is prosecuting the RAMOS and CHOICE cases. The Office of Queens District Attorney Richard Brown is prosecuting the LITTLE, HILLS, MCQUIRTER and OGLETREE cases and Assistant District Attorney Christine Burke, under the supervision of Gregory Pavlides of District Attorney Brown’s Economic Crimes Bureau, is handling the prosecutions. The Office of Charles J. Hynes, District Attorney, Kings County is prosecuting the MAYS and BLAND cases. The Office of the Bronx County District Attorney Robert T. Johnson is prosecuting the MUNOZ and CYRUS cases and Assistant District Attorney Richard Lawson, under the supervision of Bureau Chief Richard Baker of the Arson, Auto and Economic Crime Unit, is handling the prosecutions.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.*

#### **DEFENDANT INFORMATION**

1. NOREEN LITTLE, 55, formerly of 113-10 201<sup>st</sup> Street, Queens, New York. Now residing at 150 Willow Avenue, Hempstead, Long Island - Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
2. MIRIAM RAMOS, 52, 80 E. 110<sup>th</sup> Street, Apt. 17A, New York, New York - Grand Larceny in the Second Degree (\$52,016) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
3. ANA MUNOZ, 62, 1705 Bryant Ave., Apt. 1D, Bronx, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$36,972) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
4. PENNY MAYS, 43, formerly of 466 Marcy Ave., Apt. 3A, Brooklyn, New York. Now residing at 144-28 167<sup>th</sup> Street, Queens, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$36,034 jointly with LEWIS) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
5. PAT BLAND, 44, 545 Dumont Ave., Apt. 3C, Brooklyn, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$30,230) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
6. JANET MCQUIRTER, 56, 1-04 Astoria Blvd., Apt. 3F, Queens, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$26,757), Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
7. SUSANNE HILLS, 41, 84-12 Rockaway Beach Blvd., Apt. 2B, Queens, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$17,933), Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree
8. DOROTHEA CHOICE, 67, 240 Madison St., Apt. 13D, New York, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$15,984) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
9. JOANNA CYRUS, 36, 1871 Schieffelin Place, Apt. 3A, Bronx, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$14,214) and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree
10. EVELYN OGLETREE, 57, 133-40 Roosevelt Ave., Apt. 5E, Queens, New York - Grand Larceny in the Third Degree (\$5,615), Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree

***Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI directly at (212) 825-5959.***