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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Montgomery County Management Company Pays \$15,000 for Charging Residents with Disabilities for Reserved Parking

Fort Washington, PA -The Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania (“HECP”) has entered into a conciliation agreement resolving a federal housing discrimination complaint against Danella Realty and Management Company (“Danella”) and two condominium complexes for violating the disability portion of the federal Fair Housing Act.

Between January and April of 2021, HECP received complaints from two individuals who lived at Gypsy Lane Condominiums in Philadelphia. Both residents had disabilities which impaired their abilities to walk long distances and necessitated that they be permitted reserved parking spaces near their units. While Danella agreed to grant their requests, the management company informed the residents that there would be a fee for installing the signage indicating the spaces were reserved.

HECP attempted to assist the residents with negotiating the refund of the fees that they had been unlawfully charged and to educate Danella on their obligation to comply with the Fair Housing Act. When these attempts at resolution failed, HECP conducted an investigation, documenting the policy of requiring residents of Gypsy Lane Condominiums to pay for the costs associated with reserved parking spaces. In addition, HECP found that a second community, River Park House, was unwilling to allow reserved parking spaces for residents with disabilities. HECP filed a complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, known as the Fair Housing Act, makes it unlawful to discriminate in connection with any housing related transaction, based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or familial status. Housing providers are obligated under this law to permit reasonable accommodations, or changes in policies or practices, without additional conditions or fees when

necessary for residents with disabilities to use and enjoy their dwelling. Disability has been protected under the Fair Housing Act since 1988.

“A housing provider’s refusal to allow reasonable accommodations can have a significant effect on the lives of people with disabilities. The denial of an individual’s right to a reserved parking space can result in substantial inconvenience as well as increasing disability-related symptoms. Courts have established that housing providers are not permitted to charge a fee as a condition of granting a reasonable accommodation and it is the responsibility of the housing provider to bear the cost of installing a reserved parking space for a resident who requires one.” said Rachel Wentworth, Executive Director of HECP.

Danella admitted no wrongdoing, but signed an agreement that will result in the payment of \$15,000 to cover a portion of the costs incurred to bring about the agreement, to provide future consumer education regarding the fair housing rights of persons with disabilities, and to refund the fees that residents were improperly charged. Additionally, Danella has agreed to participate in comprehensive fair housing training and to revise their policies to comply with the Fair Housing Act.

The Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania has worked since 1956 to eliminate housing discrimination through education, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws. HECP’s work serves a population of over 4.65 million in the seven-county Philadelphia and Lehigh Valley regions. As the nation’s oldest fair housing agency, HECP’s successes include eradicating discriminatory practices at over 50,000 units of housing. HECP’s investigations are funded in part by the Fair Housing Initiatives Program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HECP was represented in this matter by Abara Law Firm.

Anyone suspecting that they were denied housing for discriminatory reasons, or any housing provider who wants information on how they can operate their business in compliance with the Fair Housing Act should contact HECP at 267-419-8918 or visit www.equalhousing.org.

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