

Wells Fargo threatens eviction for Southside family

Written by

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Jessica English, a single mother of four experiencing homelessness, moved into an abandoned Wells Fargo-owned home in south Minneapolis last month. The home had been broken into and used as a drug house. But Jessica, a single mother of four, student, writer, dedicated worker, and volunteer with Occupy Homes MN, saw in it the potential of a place to raise her family.

"Houses are for keeping families together, not for tearing communities apart," said Jessica. "As Wells Fargo turns its back on vacant homes that add blight to the community, one in 45 children is homeless every night. I think it's time that we start asking why, and start providing the answers to do something about it."

With the full support of the neighbors on the block, Jessica and Occupy Homes fixed up the home, cleaning up broken glass, tearing up carpet stained with human waste, and turning the water back on. A housewarming party attracted 50 neighbors and supporters. Several days later, a march on Wells Fargo Home Mortgage from Jessica's house drew 200, with 13 people peacefully arrested.

Wells Fargo, however, has repeatedly sent management to change the locks on the property, in flagrant disregard of due process laws. Minnesota law states that only a judge can order the eviction of a resident from a property. Yesterday three Minneapolis police officers attempted to carry out an illegal eviction of the home, telling the four volunteers occupying it they had to leave. The supporters turned the police away, telling them they needed permission from a judge and a warrant to enter the home. The police left, but they could return at any time.

"Homelessness in Hennepin County is at a six-year high. Shelters are overflowing, and it's been another brutal winter," said Nick Espinosa, an organizer with Occupy Homes MN. "Wells Fargo doesn't need any more empty homes, and neither does south Minneapolis. Our demand to turn the home over to a community group for affordable housing is a common sense solution that makes sense for everyone."

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Video segment on the home: kare11.tv/YixvcA