

Appleseed This Week

eNewsletter - July 16, 2010



A nonprofit network of 16 public interest justice centers in the U.S. and Mexico, Appleseed is dedicated to building a society in which opportunities are genuine, access to justice is universal and equal, and government advances the public interest.

SAVE THE DATE

Join us in Washington, DC on for our annual fall gala.

OCTOBER 7, 2010

For more information and/or to RSVP, please contact Nakia Kelly at 202.347.7960 or [email her here](#).

New Uniform Law Protects Family Land

The adoption today of a proposed uniform state law aimed at preserving home ownership for vulnerable families marks a crucial step in helping low-wealth and minority communities nationwide retain their family property. Appleseed currently has teams of pro bono attorneys comparing the uniform law to current state law, and along with several Appleseed Centers, we will now begin advocating for adoption in all states.

The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, drafted and approved by the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), establishes a number of important protections for owners of heir property, family land that has been passed down without a will, thus restricting access to the land's value and leaving families vulnerable to unfair dispossession.

"Once enacted, new state laws will not only protect family land, but help families with heir property qualify for credit and otherwise access the land's value," said Appleseed Executive Director Betsy Cavendish. "The act addresses the largest cause of black land loss in the South, and Appleseed applauds its adoption by the ULC."

Craig H. Baab, Appleseed's Heir Property Project Director, served as an official observer to the ULC drafting committee and was heavily involved in developing the act over the past three years. Meanwhile, Appleseed Centers in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas have been engaged in local efforts to address the problem through state legislation, attorney training and community education.

Among the protections adopted by ULC are improved notification practices, broader judicial consideration - courts, for example, would consider how long a family has owned the land and whether that family would be rendered homeless if it were

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sold - and the establishment of priorities for buy-outs and physical divisions of the land before a forced sale would be permitted.

A fact sheet on the uniform law and other information on heir property [is available here](#) on Appleseed's website. For more information, please contact Craig Baab at 334.263.0086 or craig.baab@alabamaappleseed.org.

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