

# Tenants Strike: 'Rats Wall to Wall'

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Mrs. Clarence Blanding is not going to pay her rent any more.

Mrs. Blanding, a 34-year-old mother of 14, lives in a battered five-room apartment at 7705 John R. She has joined a rent strike organized by United Tenants for Collective Action.

She says she has "had it" with roaches, rats, a gas stove that leaks and the rotten porch railing through which her 18-month-old son Tim plunged last summer.

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**LITTLE TIM**, his mother says, was just beginning to walk and talk before his three-story fall last July 26. Now he drools a lot, she says, adding that one side of his head is pushed in.

"Tell the man I don't talk anymore," said Mrs. Blanding, bouncing Tim in her arms. "Tell him I used to say, 'Hi.'"

The baby has become a rallying point for about 13 striking tenants in 7705 and a group of buildings in the block. All the units are owned by landlord Meyer Terebelo, of 14140 Winchester, Oak Park.

The porch railing was repaired after Tim's injury. Fresh boards were nailed across the railing. Blue pencil marks on the boards mark the point where the tot fell.

"My son had to fall before they would get a few pieces of wood up here," said Mrs. Blanding.

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**PLENTY OF** other problems in the three-story brick and stone building at 7705 have not been fixed.

City health officials said the building was cited for 29 violations last August. Two were classed as emergencies and corrected, according to Marcus Irwin, a supervisor in the sanitary engineering division of the health department.

Irwin said some of the other violations also have been corrected.

In No. 8, where 11 people live in a two-bedroom apartment, part of the bathroom ceiling fell in.

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**THERE ARE** no screens and no screen doors in apartments on upper floors.

Mrs. Blanding says she was told: "Keep your windows closed, and the flies won't come in."

She added: "We got wall-to-wall rats. . . . We used to pay \$70 a month, but we're sharing with rats and roaches, so now we pay \$75."

The rent was increased around last March, according to another tenant, Betty Scott, 33.

Mrs. Scott, a mother of two receiving Aid to Dependent Children, said there never was

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