

## ***For Immediate Release***

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## **DOWN WITH UNFAIR RENT INCREASES!**

*East Palo Alto Tenants and Community Members Launch "First of the Month" Actions until Page Mill Properties Lowers Tenant Rents!*

East Palo Alto, CA –On **Friday, August 1, 2008, at 4:00PM**, East Palo Alto tenants and community members will hold a rally to protest Page Mill Properties' illegal and absurd rent increases on their apartments. The rally will begin at **West Park Apartments at 5 Newell Court, East Palo Alto, CA**. Residents and tenants will then drive to the **Page Mill Headquarters** located at **480 Cowper Street, Palo Alto, CA** to deliver petitions demanding that Page Mill Properties immediately lower tenant rents to its just and fair amounts. This action is the launch of the "First of the Month" Actions – an action on the first of the month, every month, that tenants will conduct until Page Mill Properties lowers tenants' rents.

In June 2008, Page Mill Properties announced yet another round of rent increases to pass on to tenants living in their 1,700 units in East Palo Alto. Residents feel that these increases are illegal and unjust, and are tired of Page Mill Properties lack of accountability and seemingly roguish way of determining rent increases. However, increased tenant pressure have resulted in wins – including the Rent Board adopting sweeping changes on rent board rules and regulations, the City Attorney considering filing a rent injunction, and the launch of a community coalition to advocate for tenant rights. The August 1st rally will feature tenant speakers as well as community organizations involved with the Fair Rents Now Coalition to apply direct pressure on Page Mill Properties, and tenants vow to organize an action every month until Page Mill agrees to our demands.

Since January 2008, Youth United for Community Action, a community organization made of young people working on environmental and

social justice issues in our community of East Palo Alto, has been working to stop the rent increases and support tenants who have been affected by them. YUCA members, some of whom have been affected by these rent increases as well, have organized rent clinics, outreached to tenants, organized tenants to attend rent hearings and court hearings, held rallies, and proposed changes to the Rent Board Regulations. "These increases are not fair," says YUCA youth and East Palo Alto resident Carlos Castillo. "I believe Page Mill Properties is doing the rent increases out of greed which is unfair for tenants who are only there to live. Some people have moved, got more than one job, got roommates, and re-adjust their bills to pay the rent. With the bad economy and gas being high, it leaves less money for rent and necessities of life."

\*\*\*\*\* Photo Opportunities Available \*\*\*\*\*