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Verdict Provides Care for Brain-Injured Girl

Attorneys Richard Vangelisti and Scott Kocher obtained a \$560,000 verdict on behalf of a toddler injured in a fall from a second-story window, after the landlord's insurer denied the claim. The girl was the second child to suffer a serious injury in falls at rental units managed by Keys Rental Management, LLC. The Beaverton-based company manages approximately 615 rental units on behalf of approximately 16 related holding companies.

The verdict affirms the duty of Oregon landlords to warn tenants about unreasonably low or otherwise dangerous windows at rental properties. The case follows lobbying by the property management industry to defeat legislation to prevent child window falls in Oregon in 2001. Nationally, more than 4,700 children are injured in window falls each year, including more than 12 in the Portland area last summer. A Keys manager testified at trial that the company has begun to discuss steps to promote child safety at its rental properties.

The court dismissed the landlord's lawsuit against the child's mother, who had opened the window for ventilation in anticipation of leaving the house with her two children. The toddler fell when the mother unexpectedly rushed out of the room to aid her older child, who she thought had been injured while playing.

Verdict funds will be managed by a court-appointed conservator on behalf of the child.

Vangelisti Kocher LLP is a Portland-based law firm representing individuals and families in settlements and civil trials in Oregon and Washington. Founding partner Richard Vangelisti has focused on trial law since 1995. Scott Kocher is a graduate of Harvard Law School, and has developed his civil trial practice since 2001.

Case information:

Piazza v. Keys Rental Management, LLC et al, Multnomah County Circuit Court
(Portland, Oregon), civil case no. 0801-00911

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