



PRO BONO NEWSLETTER
October 2009

**THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY HOSTS NEW YORK CITY'S LARGEST
 EXTERN ASSOCIATE CLASS**

As a result of the economic downturn, major law firms have expanded traditional externship programs to enable a large number of first year and current associates to volunteer for up to one year with public interest programs. In response, The Legal Aid Society itself has expanded its regular externship program to accommodate 37 externs in the Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights Practices.

The Society is hosting New York City's largest extern program. We are also collaborating with other non-profit legal services organizations to ensure the program's success. Liliana Vaamonde, Civil Practice Training Director, assisted with the planning of a week-long public interest orientation for deferred associates that was sponsored by the City Bar Justice Center ("CBJC"). The orientation was designed to transition law firm associates into public interest legal work and featured a series of trainings in which Legal Aid Society staff attorneys Hasan Shafiqul-

lah and Sateesh Nori participated as faculty. The program also featured seminars and roundtable discussions at which Adriene Holder, Attorney in Charge of the Civil Practice, was a participant. The Legal Aid Society, in conjunction with CBJC and the Young Korean American Service and Education Center, hosted a specialized training, "How to Triage a Housing Court Case," which was led by Lauren Donnelly, Supervising Attorney of our Bronx Civil office, and Matthew Tropp, Bronx Civil Staff attorney. The Society also hosted a separate orientation breakfast on October 6th, where externs received an overview of the Society's policies and mission as well as a presentation from Shari Graham, a Skadden associate externing at the Harlem Community Law Office.

The Legal Aid Society's 2009-2010 externship program is an extension of our long-standing partnership with the private bar that has included an externship component for many years. We are confident

that after spending an extended period of time working directly with Legal Aid staff and our clients, the 2009-2010 externs will become pro bono leaders and will continue to work with the Society upon their return to their firms. We look forward to working with them throughout their legal careers. The Society's 2009-2010 externs are from Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP; Dechert LLP; Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP; DLA Piper; McDermott Will & Emery; Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo P.C.; Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP; Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP; Proskauer Rose LLP; Ropes & Gray LLP; Shearman & Sterling LLP; Sidley Austin LLP; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates; Troutman Sanders LLP; Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP; and White & Case LLP

For a complete roster of our 2009 extern class, please see page 3.



Jonathan Lippman, Chief Judge of the State of New York

**CHIEF JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN TO PRESIDE OVER
 THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY'S 2009 PRO BONO AWARDS**

On October 26th, the Legal Aid Society's 2009 Pro Bono Awards Ceremony will honor the leading pro bono volunteers, law firms, corporations, as well as individual community representatives for their outstanding pro bono services provided to The Legal Aid Society and the Society's clients during the past year. The Pro Bono Awards will serve as one of the inaugural events of the American Bar Associations' National Pro Bono Celebration, which runs from October 25 - 30, 2009. This select group of professionals was nominated by the Society's staff from the more than two thousand pro bono counsel who handled matters on behalf of our clients. The volunteers and their firms will be recognized for legal excellence in handling administrative hearings, trials, appeals, class actions, and transactional cases on behalf of senior citizens, disabled children and adults, domestic violence survivors, abused and neglected children, immigrants facing deportation, homeless and imminently homeless children and adults, indigent criminal defendants, inmates in correctional facilities, and other vulnerable and forgotten New Yorkers.

The Awards Ceremony on Monday, October 26, will be held at Espace, 635 W. 42nd Street between 11th and 12th Avenues from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

LAW FIRMS WORK TO PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Low-income families and individuals are being forced out of their apartments and into the homeless shelter system and other inadequate housing situations because of unlivable conditions in their apartments. The failure of landlords to maintain their properties results in inadequate heat and hot water; vermin infestation; structural damage to ceilings, walls, and floors; and leakage and water damage. A hazardous living environment not only threatens the health of the tenants, but also places the tenants at risk of losing irreplaceable Section 8 housing subsidies. To address this problem systemically, The Legal Aid Society has created the "Adopt a Building" pro bono project in which law firms represent most if not all of the tenants in a building who are being endangered by the landlord's failure to maintain their building. Participating pro bono counsel conduct client interviews and fact investigation, draft legal papers, engage in negotiations and trial preparation, and represent clients at relevant judicial proceedings.

Cooley Godward Kronish LLP, Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, and Jones Day are the first firms to "Adopt a Building." Cooley is co-counsel for a 98 unit building whose landlord, in addition

to failing to make necessary repairs, has repeatedly tried to intimidate the tenants from joining the tenants association, and has issued phony "violation" forms that allegedly are going into the tenants' files. The firm is litigating the hazardous conditions issue and is seeking enforcement of a new City law forbidding harassment of tenants seeking repairs. Kirkland & Ellis LLP, working with the Harlem Community Law Office, is representing tenants in Upper Manhattan who live in buildings that are in sub-par condition. Hughes Hubbard & Reed is representing tenants in the Bronx who are living in buildings with multiple violations, and Jones Day is creating a firm wide pro bono project that will engage first year associates and more senior counsel.

The Legal Aid Society, collaborating with community organizations, continues to hear from tenants that their landlords refuse to correct unsafe and dangerous building conditions. We are looking forward to additional law firms joining the "Adopt a Building" pro bono project. They will be playing an invaluable role in ensuring that vulnerable families and individuals are not put at risk of homelessness and that New York City's limited affordable housing stock is preserved.

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY PRESENTS ITS TWELFTH ANNUAL CLE PRO BONO TRAINING SERIES

The Legal Aid Society is proud to present its 12th annual CLE Pro Bono Training Series, commencing in November of 2009 and running through April of 2010. The training sessions will be conducted at participating New York City law firms. Seminars will cover diverse aspects of the Society's practice: children's rights, administrative hearings and appeals, immigration law, community economic development, prisoners' rights, family law, HIV/AIDS representation, low income taxpayers' rights, and general civil practice. The outstanding faculty from The Legal Aid Society and the private bar are experts in their fields of practice.

The scope of offerings have been expanded to address urgent, emerging legal needs of low income families and individuals. The varied menu of seminars offer significant pro bono opportunities to litigators, transactional counsel, and in-house corporate attorneys. For the second consecutive year, we will feature a two-part seminar addressing the mortgage foreclosure crisis affecting a growing number of New Yorkers. These seminars, "Subprime Lending and Litigation Strategies (I)," and "New York State Foreclosure Laws, Defenses, and Settlement Options (II)," are scheduled in December of 2009 and will equip volunteer attorneys with the requisite knowledge and skills to represent clients who are facing the loss of their homes.

For more information on seminars, including registration information and a complete schedule, please visit the Pro Bono section of our website at www.legal-aid.org.

To download a full schedule of our 2009-2010 CLE Pro Bono Training Program, please visit the New York City Pro Bono Center Website, www.probono.net/ny/nyc.



LAW FIRMS WORK TO REDUCE DRACONIAN ROCKEFELLER DRUG LAW SENTENCING PRISON TERMS

Pro Bono partnership established with Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP; Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP; Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP; Kaye Scholer LLP; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP; Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; and Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

The New York State Legislature's recent amendment to the Rockefeller drug laws became effective on October 7th and inmates initially sentenced to mandatory indeterminate Class B felon prison terms now have the opportunity to apply for re-sentencing to a greatly reduced term. Many prisoners who already have served a long sentence will be eligible for immediate release if their petitions are granted. The Legal Aid Society, as the primary public defender and largest post-conviction appellate law office in New York City, will be counsel for a large percentage of the prisoners eligible for re-sentencing.

Based upon the successful Rockefeller Re-Sentencing Pro Bono Project on behalf of A felons, The Legal Aid Society has established a pro bono partnership with nine (9) firms - Cleary Gottlieb, Davis Polk, Debevoise & Plimpton, Fried Frank, Gibson Dunn, Kaye Scholer, Paul Weiss, Simpson Thacher, and Weil Gotshal - that will provide partner supervision and representation for multiple inmates. Almost sixty (60) attor-

neys from the participating law firms were trained to present the inmate's prior criminal record, participation in rehabilitative programs, disciplinary history, and family and community support that will be critical to successful outcomes. Pro bono counsel will be appearing in State Supreme Court and will be responsible, with supervision by the Society's Criminal Appeals Bureau, for the preparation and presentation of a sentence mitigation argument based upon the original trial/plea and sentencing records, appeal record, prison record and defendant's prospects for release.

Our pro bono partners on the Rockefeller Re-Sentencing Project are providing crucial assistance to enable the Society to represent close to 300 inmates who are eligible for a re-sentencing hearing and release from prison. Their pro bono contribution will increase the likelihood that clients will successfully petition for this newly created legislative remedy.

2009 ROSTER OF LAW FIRM ASSOCIATE EXTERNS AT THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP

Zachary Martin

Dechert LLP

Jonathan Gaines

Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP

Kelli Lanski
Michael McLaughlin
George Mustes

DLA Piper

Annie Chen

McDermott Will & Emery

Barbara Cusumano

Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky and

Popeo PC
Nicholas Bentley

Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

Aylese Kanze
Erin Murphy

Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

Jennifer Liu

Proskauer Rose LLP

Yafang Deng

Ropes & Gray LLP

Joseph Cleeman
Ron Hagiz
Haley Park
Christopher Reid
Philip Wells

Shearman & Sterling LLP

Alexis Berkowitz
Michael Haidas
Frances Ma
Gary Tashjian
Tina Varghese

Sidley Austin LLP

Audrey Christopher

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Justin Diamant
Thea Johnson

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

LLP & Affiliates
Laura McIntyre
Gregory Ogunsanya

Troutman Sanders LLP

Kevin Wallace

Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP

Shrutee Raina
Ami Zweig

White & Case LLP

Andrew Lizotte
Jennifer Oh
Alan Schindler
Brooke Sharpe
Jonathan Sorkowitz
Imtiaz Yakub

SECOND ACTS® ATTORNEY HELPS SENIOR CITIZEN REGAIN DEED TO HOME AND LIFE SAVINGS

Roger Hawke, a retired partner formerly with Sidley Austin LLP, is a Second Acts® attorney with The Legal Aid Society's Brooklyn Office for the Aging ("BOFTA"). Second Acts® is a pilot project, funded by the Pro Bono Institute, to establish innovative and replicable public interest law opportunities for transitioning and retired attorneys. Since January of 2009, he has worked two days a week BOFTA, providing outstanding legal assistance to a low-income elderly Brooklyn residents and expanding the office's scope of services.

Mr. Hawke's exemplary representation of an elderly veteran exposed a scam to fraudulently gain title to the client's home and steal his life savings of \$25,000. The client had met an "advocate" in Family Court where she had offered to assist him with a child support case. Believing that she was helping him, the client gave her documents, including the deed to his home. Unbeknownst to the client, the "advocate" forged his signature on a transfer deed and on a power of attorney form, enabling her to withdraw funds from client's bank account. Mr. Hawke initiated two separate successful New York State Supreme court actions to have the forged deed expunged and the wrongfully taken life savings returned to its rightful owner. The case was covered by the New York Daily News in which Mr. Hawke stated, "It's so easy to take the property away but so difficult to correct it." Mr. Hawke will be recognized for his exemplary lawyering at 2009 The Legal Aid Society's Pro Bono Awards presided over by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman.

MAKING THE CASE FOR HUMANITY

The Legal Aid Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social and economic fabric of New York City - passionately advocating for individuals across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also pursuing a broad legal reform agenda.

ALAN LEVINE
Chairperson of the Board

BLAINE (FIN) V. FOGG
President

STEVEN BANKS
Attorney-in-Chief

Marlene Halpern
Supervising Attorney for Pro Bono
MIHalpern@legal-aid.org
(212) 577-3288

Katie Niejadlik
Pro Bono Administrator
KANiejadlik@legal-aid.org
(212) 577-3919

Rosemary Hare-Bey
Pro Bono Coordinator
RHarebey@legal-aid.org
(212) 577-3358



For more information about the work of The Legal Aid Society's Pro Bono Practice, please contact Katie Niejadlik, Pro Bono Administrator, at KANiejadlik@legal-aid.org