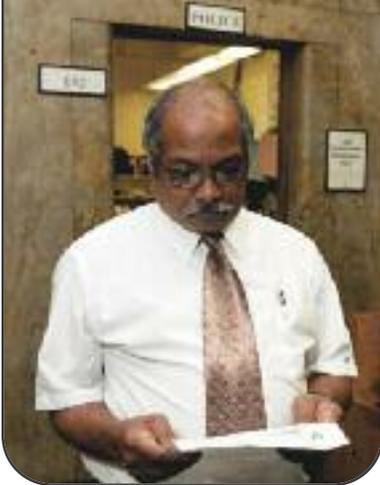


# *A Day in the Life of* **THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY**

**W**hen people have trouble, they come to The Legal Aid Society, one of the busiest law firms in New York City and the oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services provider in the United States. The Legal Aid Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform. The Legal Aid Society is the lawyer for low-income New Yorkers, the safety net when all else has failed. The staff is the core of this great institution – over 1,100 Legal Aid Society lawyers working with 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Every job and every person help make it possible for The Legal Aid Society to be the voice for low-income New Yorkers. The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession. The Legal Aid Society's unique value is an ability to go beyond any one case to create more equitable outcomes for individuals and broader, more powerful systemic change for society as a whole. In addition to the annual caseload of 300,000 individual cases and legal matters, the Society's law reform work benefits some 2 million low-income families and individuals in New York City and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a Statewide and national impact.

6:30 AM - 7:30 AM



Paralegal Ramon Willoughby walks into the Police Room at Manhattan Criminal Court. They call him the “writ man” because he monitors the arrest to arraignment time. In Staten Island, Christopher Pisciotta, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Office there, reviews the police arrest logs to determine if any detainees have been held by police beyond 24 hours without appearing before the Court. Queens Criminal Court arraignment Paralegal Cristian Espinal gets the LAS arraignment office ready for another busy day by organizing and writing up case files for clients to be interviewed that day. He also checks the status of open cases a client may have. On Rikers Island, Marie Washington, Director of the Paralegal Program, makes certain she has coverage in all 10 jails. Civil Practice Administrator Ramona Gordon opens the Harlem Community Law Office. In Brooklyn, Paralegal Herbie Grant is opening the Brooklyn Neighborhood Office where people will soon bring their problems concerning housing, benefit denials and immigration. In the Bronx JRP office, Delinquency Supervisor Mark Dellaquila arrives early to get a jump on the day. He finishes up papers to file an emergency stay application at the Appellate Division seeking the immediate release of a client who was unjustly remanded. He quickly gets pulled from that task to field morning calls and distribute cases for coverage. Tamara Steckler, Attorney-in-Charge of the JRP Practice, boards a plane to Washington, D.C. to participate in a meeting with the Department of Justice to discuss the direction of juvenile justice reform in the coming year.

Jose Martinez has made all the preparations for opening the Civil Practice’s Bronx Neighborhood Office. A few families with small children are waiting to come in. Jose helps the mothers with the strollers and gives the children some toys and books. JRP Staff Attorney Carol Hochberg leaves her home and drives to Long Island to obtain a client’s signature on an affidavit, enabling her to file a motion in Queens Family Court when the clerk’s office opens at 9:00 AM. Staten Island Supervising Attorney Joseph Licitra meets with the Court, prosecutor and Treatment Court staff to discuss the progress of our clients in court mandated drug treatment programs. Assigned early arraignments, Brooklyn CDP Staff Attorney Jasmine Foreman is interviewing a client in the holding area who is charged with a misdemeanor, while cluster supervisors are meeting in a conference room about changes in recent practices in the District Attorney’s office. Paralegal Margaret McClean is checking and arranging the drug treatment court files for cases scheduled that morning as drug treatment Staff Attorneys Dawn Dapelo and Roslyn Morrison interview clients in varying stages of post plea treatment. Civil Practice Staff Attorney Sumani Lanka heads to court for a foreclosure settlement conference as Judith Goldiner, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice’s Law Reform Unit, prepares testimony to present before the New York City Council. Later, Judith and Staff Attorneys Ellen Davidson and Robert Desir will meet with the Public Advocate’s Office about rent subsidies.

8:00 AM - 9:30 AM



10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON



Bronx CDP Staff Attorney Gaynor Cunningham consults with a polygraph expert before a test is administered to her client. Red Hook Community Justice Center Staff Attorney Daniel Ashworth interviews a client who just began a vocational training program while Mental Health Attorney, Edna McGoldrick, declares ready for trial with a 17-year-old client who has brought his friends to court to act as defense witnesses. Richard Joselson, Supervising Attorney in the Criminal Appeals Bureau, is answering the email of a staff attorney on trial in the Bronx, advising her how to fully preserve the record should an appeal be necessary. Staff Attorney Tashi Lhewa assists a client facing unscrupulous practices by debt collectors. Supervising Attorney Laura Russell and Staff Attorney Jack Newton are interviewing a domestic violence survivor in the Bronx who has immigration issues as well. In Staten Island, JRP Social Worker Kelsey Jorgensen meets with an 18-year old client to help her find medical and mental health care, obtain housing, and plan for her upcoming childbirth. Kai-lin Hsu, Staff Attorney with the Education Advocacy Project, heads to Brooklyn to represent our client at an Impartial Hearing against the Department of Education. She negotiates a settlement with the DOE representative, who admits that the school isn’t able to meet our client’s needs and agrees to fund a placement at a private school. Then Kai-lin rushes back to the Bronx to accompany a teenage client to an interview at a school that serves overage, under-credited students.

**D**river Derrick Maultsby drives the Society's Mobile Justice Unit to Brooklyn near the PATH, the City's homeless families intake center, and Staff Attorney Kathryn Kliff gets out to speak with families who are homeless and seeking shelter. Staff Attorney Natasha Ingram talks to a client in the hall in Bronx Housing Court while a few feet away, Staff Attorney Helen Frieder is negotiating with lawyers for the landlord. On Rikers Island, Paralegal Kasandra Robinson is interviewing a woman inmate in the Rose M. Singer Center whose family needs emergency assistance while, Lorraine McEville, Director of the Parole Revocation Defense Unit, is representing a client who has been wrongfully charged with violating the conditions of his release. Back at Water Street, Special Litigation Staff Attorney John Schoeffel is fielding phone calls from attorneys who need advice and facts checked so they can present new evidence to the Judge when court resumes at 2:00 PM. Dodd Terry, Attorney-in-Charge of JRP's Manhattan office, heads to a meeting for Agency Heads and the Supervising Judge of the Manhattan Family Court where he will advocate for JRP's staff and clients regarding court processes, while Staff Attorney Yissel Cabrera is speaking to a foster parent and client on the phone about her emergency motion that will permit the client to remain in her foster home. JRP Staff Attorney John Newberry is on his way to the Appellate Division to argue a writ he filed for the release of our Bronx client charged with delinquency and remanded by the Family Court.



**S**upervising Attorney Kimberly Forte of the LGBT Law and Policy Initiative conducts a training class for new attorneys in the Criminal Practice. JRP Social Worker Godline Deterville leaves the office at 2:30 PM to make a field visit to the foster home of three young clients who were remanded the day before on a newly filed abuse case. Adolescent Intervention Staff Attorney Debbie Rush, Social Worker Lori Salyer and Investigator Jaime Badia are on a video conference with a client at Riker's Island so the client can view a video obtained by the investigator and discuss a plea offer. In juvenile detention in Bronx Family Court, Vicki Light, the Trauma Advocacy Project attorney in the Bronx JRP office, is on trial for an abuse case of a three-month-old client with multiple fractures. Adriene Holder, Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice, is on a conference call discussing upcoming hearings on civil legal services before meeting with the Robin Hood Foundation, a major funder. Harlem Community Law Office Supervising Attorney Karen Hambrick interviews potential clients at a Single Stop session at a community-based organization. Tina Luongo, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Practice, meets with the DNA Unit before joining a conference call on pre-trial detention. Tina has been selected to represent all New York City defenders as part of a team of stakeholders in New York City's criminal justice system working with the MacArthur Foundation to initiate systemic changes in pre-trial detention and racial disparity.

**M**arshall Green, the Attorney-in-Charge of the Civil Practice's Bronx Neighborhood Office, is outside the Bronx Housing Court talking to clients. Employment Law Attorney-in-Charge Karen Cacace and Staff Attorney Amy Hong confer with a client who has been harassed on her job while JoJo Annobil, Attorney-in-Charge of the Immigration Law Unit, is on a conference call with colleagues discussing the New York Immigrant Family Unit Project for detained immigrants facing deportation. JRP Paralegal Angelica Rodriguez meets with 13-year-old Rosa, who speaks only Spanish. Angelica immediately contacts Rosa's foster family to come to court so that her JRP Staff Attorney Jennifer Smith can advocate for her release. Community Justice Unit Director Sandeep Kandhari and his staff meet with a community partner to plan Know Your Rights sessions. Queens Paralegal Lucy Herschel takes a frantic call from a distressed mother seeking advice who has received a visit from a detective looking for her son whom they intend to arrest. Lucy will confer with a supervising attorney who will assign an attorney to coordinate the surrender of the son to a local police precinct and represent him in the Criminal Court arraignment part. Attorney-in-Chief Seymour W. James returns to Water Street from a budget meeting at City Hall. He has just enough time to answer a few calls and emails, pack up copies of testimony to read later tonight, and head out for a State Bar committee meeting.



6:30 PM - 10:00 PM



Cara Chambers, Supervising Attorney of the Kathryn A. McDonald Education Advocacy Project, has just finished interviewing a young client before rushing off to conduct a training session for caseworkers, parents and community leaders about the rights of children with disabilities. By the time she gets home, her email box will be filled with follow up questions which she will answer that night and tomorrow morning. The Project helps children in foster care with developmental issues in education. Family Court in the Bronx has ended just a little while ago so Dawne Mitchell, Attorney-in-Charge of the Bronx Juvenile Rights Office, is finishing up for the day, while Staff Attorney Maria Roumiantseva is at her desk entering her final edits on a conflict motion that she plans on filing the next day. In Harlem, Civil Practice Supervising Attorney Magna Rosa-Rios and Paralegal LeShawn Earl are conducting a Know Your Rights session for a community group, while in the Queens Neighborhood Office, Attorney-in-Charge Sateesh Nori is handling an emergency situation for a client who was referred by a State Assembly member. Jonathan Chasan, a Supervising Attorney in the Prisoners' Rights Project, is talking to family members of an inmate who was badly beaten at Rikers by correction officers. In arraignment parts throughout the City, Legal Aid attorneys are working the night shift where they will arraign clients until 1:00 AM..

Edward McCarthy, arraignment supervisor, is leaving Manhattan Criminal Court. The Night Court shift is over. Everyone knows Ed – court officers, EMTs, court clerks, Assistant District Attorneys and judges alike. He will have to swing back in the morning to conduct a training class for new lawyers at the Legal Aid headquarters on Water Street. He stops and jots down a note for his training class: "Why are you working so hard to keep me out of jail?" The question came from a client he represented earlier – a disheveled, frightened young man whom Ed will refer to the Legal Aid MICA Project to try to get him into a treatment program for mentally ill, chemically addicted clients. Later today during the training session, Ed will tell the new young lawyers his answer: "Because I am your lawyer and I will fight for you." In just a few hours, Ramon Willoughby will check arrest to arraignment times. Herbie Grant will arrive at the Brooklyn Neighborhood Office and Ramona Gordon will open the Harlem Community Law Office. And another day at The Legal Aid Society begins.

1:30 AM



MAKING THE CASE FOR HUMANITY