



The Legal Project

Pro Bono Corner February 2013

Lisa A. Frisch, Executive Director

Thank You for Your Support!

In 2012, we started a new campaign, *Every Dollar Makes a Difference*, which encourages law firms and businesses to consider making donations in installments over the course of a year to support a staff person here at The Legal Project. Providing the contributions over time makes the expenditure more manageable for the donor, and essentially allows them to build it into their on-going expenses, while supporting access to justice in our community.

The Law Firm of **Martin, Harding & Mazzotti** and **The Swyer Companies** (Stuyvesant Plaza) stepped up last year to be major contributors in this initiative, allowing us to support a full time paralegal position in our domestic violence program. Martin, Harding and Mazzotti made weekly donations of \$480.77 and the Swyer Companies—a long-time supporter of our program-- donated a significant portion of our rent payments for the year, allowing us to use those resources to help support the staff position in 2012.

We just received the exciting news that Martin, Harding & Mazzotti will be participating in this initiative again in 2013, which will focus on **supporting a full time domestic violence staff attorney**. We can't thank them enough for their on-going support!

Additionally, the **Law Firm of Anne Reynolds Copps** signed on for 2012-13 as a small firm to provide installment payments, in hopes of encouraging other small firms or solo practitioners to consider making contributions over the course of the year at lower levels that, combined with other firms, will make a significant difference in supporting our ability to serve our clients. ***Our 2013 goal is to raise \$150,000 which will allow us to serve an additional 250 victims of domestic violence.*** For more information about this initiative, please contact Lisa Frisch at lfrisch@legalproject.org.

Thank you to Deily Mooney and Glastetter!

We so appreciate the generosity of the Law Firm of Deily, Mooney and Glastetter, LLP, who donated \$750 from the firm, in honor of their clients, in lieu of holiday gifts. This means so much to us!

Winter Appeal

As our Winter Appeal continues, we would like to thank *all* of the firms, businesses and individuals who have helped support us during 2012 and continue to do so in 2013. The need continues to grow, and the private support that provides us unrestricted funds for our programs is critical to our efforts to enhance and increase our services. Tax deductible donations can be made by check or on our secure website at www.legalproject.org. Thank you!

New Foreclosure Program and Staffing Changes!

The Legal Project was very fortunate to receive funding from the New York State Attorney General's Office Homeownership Protection Program (HOPP) to provide foreclosure mitigation legal services in the Capital Region, along with our community partners, **Legal Aid of Northeastern New York** and our Home Ownership Adviser partners, and under the guidance of Anchor Partner, **Empire Justice Center**. This funding will allow us to expand the services that we had been providing for foreclosure clients over the past three years; now providing the support so we are able to more effectively fill a major need—sadly—in our area. We will be serving the counties of Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga, Rensselaer, Columbia, Schoharie, Fulton and Montgomery. We appreciate the steadfast support that **Attorney General Schneiderman** has given to legal services and housing counselors in our efforts to help prevent foreclosures in New York State.

Additional staffing was also provided within this grant, and **Gayle Hartz**, who is one of our stellar staff attorneys who was working part-time on our previous foreclosure program and doing domestic violence representation, is now the full time supervising attorney on this project. **Tia Sullivan** moved into the position of Paralegal and a new staff attorney, **Christy Lay-Mumin**, is on this grant full time. **Christopher Fain** has joined us to take over the projects that Tia had previously coordinated, so there have been many positive changes here at The Legal Project!

Meet the New Staff!



Christy Lay-Mumin & Christopher Fain

Christopher Fain

We would like to welcome Christopher Fain to The Legal Project. Christopher is our newest Legal Services Coordinator and will be working on the following programs: Bankruptcy, Wills, Uncontested Divorce, Legally Speaking and the Affordable Housing Attorney Assistance project (AHAA!).

Christopher grew up in Schoharie County and graduated from Middleburgh Central School in 1999. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration and for the past 10+ years has worked in the legal field as a paralegal, primarily in the matrimonial and family law fields but also has experience in real estate, litigation, estate planning as well as in the not-for-profit sector. While working within the legal community, we had interactions with Christopher on different projects and when we had an opening he was very eager to join our team!

Christy Lay-Mumin

Christy joins us from Louisville Kentucky. She graduated from Indiana University Law School-Indianapolis where she received the Norman Lefstein Award of Excellence for her pro bono work during law school. Coming from a working class family, Christy saw the great disparity for those she knew and their ability to access legal services. It was with this background that she wanted to ensure she would help those that often get overlooked.

For five years she worked with Department of Children Services in Indiana, where she helped to establish the Clark County Family Court Program and the Clark County Family Drug Court Program. Christy also served as a board member for Legal Volunteers organizing legal representation for those in need in Southern Indiana. Since moving to the Albany area Christy has worked primarily representing consumers in foreclosures and bankruptcy, with Legal Aid of Northeastern New York and a small private firm. Christy is looking forward to working with and helping individuals achieve a level playing field in the foreclosure process.

While not working, she is enjoying discovering the New York area with her husband, Zahir, and cat, Grey. She also enjoys reading, photography, sports and cheering for her alma mater the University of Louisville.

Thank you for volunteering in December!

Domestic Violence Legal Connection

Jessica Ansert-Klami
Barrett Mack
Adam Silverman
Michael Yood

Albany Housing Authority

Meredith Savitt
Margaret Vella
Theresa Taylor and Wendy Weeden –
Coordinators

Albany Public Library

Ron Orlando
Sasha Ensslin - Coordinator

Equinox

Rebekah Nellis Kennedy

Mechanicville Community Center

Anne Reynolds Copps
Casey Copps DiPaola

Schenectady YWCA

Denise Resta-Tobin

Small Business Clinic

Larry Stevens
M. Khamel Abdulai - Coordinator

South End

Meredith Savitt
Margaret Vella
Theresa Taylor and Wendy Weeden –
Coordinators

Stratton VA Hospital

Michael O'Connor
Larry Signer – Coordinator

Unity House

Tom Kenney
Abe Bolgatz – Coordinator

VETHELP Clinic (Ballston Spa)

John Kraigenow
Karen Szubinski—Coordinator