



Legal Aid Society of San Diego, Inc.  
**Pro Bono Program**  
Fall 2005 Volume 5, Issue 3

## Celebrating the work we do

Over 100 volunteers joined us at the LASSD Pro Bono Program Volunteer Appreciation Lunch on May 26. Our distinguished speakers, **Hon. H. Ronald Domnitz**, and **Hon. Margie G. Woods**, emphasized to the audience the importance of pro bono and its benefit to poor people and to the Court.

### BY THE NUMBERS

The Pro Bono Program had a very successful program year. Here's why:  
**17,000 volunteer hours donated**  
**by 800 program volunteers**  
**1,000 clients served**  
**\$2.5 million in services delivered**  
Our heartfelt thanks for your great work!



LASSD Board President **Barry J. Tucker, Esq.**, left, and Executive Director/Chief Counsel **Gregory E. Knoll, Esq.**, right, presented LASSD Outstanding Services Award to **Margaret Mann, Esq.**, of Heller, Ehrman, LLP.

### Civil Harassment Restraining Order services and hours expanded

Thanks to generous funding from **San Diego Superior Court** and the **Administrative Office of the Court**, LASSD has expanded its services to include Civil Temporary Restraining Orders at the South County and East County Court-houses.

We have also extended our clinic hours at the East County Court-house. The new hours are:

#### Tuesday and Thursday

9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

#### Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

If you are interest in volunteering at the clinics, e-mail **Rebecca Sigrist** at [RebeccaS@LASSD.org](mailto:RebeccaS@LASSD.org).

## DHOP opens new clinic; helps homeless and “almost” homeless

The Disabled Homeless Outreach Project (DHOP), coordinated by our Equal Justice Works fellow **Jack Dailey, Esq.**, has opened a new clinic in Pacific Beach in partnership with the Welcome Door Program. Welcome Door provides hot meals and access to medical services by UCSD medical students, dental services, acupuncture and now legal services. This partnership fits into the DHOP's goal of providing homeless individuals with disabilities “one-stop shopping” for their health care and legal needs.

Resolving health care and legal problems are important steps to coming out of homelessness. A recent DHOP success story, however, provides a good example of how resolving these types of problems can help individuals avoid homelessness in the first place. In a recent case, our client, “Ann,” has End Stage Renal Disease (requiring regular dialysis), diabetes, high blood pressure,

a heart condition and severe depression. She was about to be evicted for non-payment of rent because her vital federal disability benefits had been discontinued. Ann was shocked to learn that her benefits were being discontinued as a result of a 20 year old warrant issued for failure to pay a small probation fee. Ann had long believed that all the terms of her probation, for a minor non-violent offense committed, were completed. In addition to losing her federal disability and Medi-Cal benefits, she now stood to lose her apartment.

The DHOP quickly filed several appeals in order to reinstate Ann's federal disability and Medi-Cal benefits. The DHOP also began working with Ann's dialysis clinic and social workers from Catholic Charities to find temporary housing for Ann. Contact was also made with the probation department to determine how to resolve the warrant.

This one case involved many people working together to save our client from homelessness. In addition to over 70 hours of Jack's time, the help of the social workers and generous contributions from the Kidney Foundation and Catholic Charities helped Ann resolve the warrant, reinstate her benefits, maintain housing and, most importantly, maintain her health. Jack sends special thanks to **Donna Halshaw** and **Dr. Amy Mahoney** for their efforts and commitment to helping our client.

### DHOP Clinics

United Methodist Church  
1561 Thomas Avenue, Pacific Beach  
Wednesday 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

St. Vincent de Paul's Villages Medical Clinic  
1501 Imperial Avenue, San Diego  
Monday 1-4 p.m. & Wednesday 9 a.m. - Noon

To volunteer with the DHOP, e-mail **Jack Dailey** at [JackD@LASSD.org](mailto:JackD@LASSD.org).

## Our gratitude to ...



We are very grateful to **Elisa Sue, Esq.**, and **Elsa Carre, Esq.**, who are assisting us at the Domestic Violence and Civil Temporary Restraining Order Clinic at the South County Courthouse. Elisa also works at the East County Unlawful Detainer/Civil TRO Clinic and Hall of Justice UD Clinic.

## Condo conversion case

**Catherine Rodman, Esq.**, and **Mike Padzer, Esq.**, of **Affordable Housing Advocates**, represented Kelly S., an on-site manager, in asserting her rights when her landlord converted the apartment building in which she was living into a condominium complex. In the settlement, Kelly received payment of rent and return of her security deposit. Kelly was delighted. She wrote: "I had called on behalf of my tenants and it ended up I needed help. Ms. Rodman and her whole office were as outstanding as your services, and then some. Thank you very much!"

## Moot court helps with Supreme Court prep

Leading appellate lawyers, **Mauricio Flores, Esq.**, **Paul Renne, Esq.**, **Ed Silverman, Esq.** and **David Pollack, Esq.**, volunteered as Moot Court Judges last April. They helped LASSD Lead Housing Attorney **Bernadette (Bernie) Probus, Esq.** prepare for argument before the California Supreme Court on May 4 in the case *Wasatch Property Management v. Siriah Degrate*. The Court ruled in favor of our client, representing a significant victory for tenants of Section 8 housing. Well done, **Bernie** – and thank you to our Moot Court Judges!



## Family law clients aided

**Alan Marblestone, Esq.** spent over 100 hours assisting two family law clients with dissolution, restraining order, custody, visitation, child support and spousal support issues. Both were sophisticated cases. In one case, the client had moved to Missouri and was monolingual Spanish-speaking. Alan's expertise enabled these clients to receive an excellent result! Thank you, Alan.

## Client wins SSI appeal for disabled daughter

**Sara Raffer, Esq.** successfully won an SSI appeal for Jenny S., a toddler with multiple neurological disabilities. Jenny's mother contacted LASSD seeking help at Jenny's SSI appeal hearing. Sara, then a volunteer and now LASSD Pro Bono Staff Attorney, was victorious in her argument that Jenny's multiple disabilities, while individually not marked, as a whole, left her disabled under the SSI rules. After almost a year of waiting for an appeal date, Jenny was awarded SSI retroactive to her date of birth.

## Mediation collaboration

The Pro Bono Program is excited about its new collaboration with Restorative Justice Mediation Program. This merger has helped to bolster the Pro Bono Program's victim/offender program as well as gain many experienced volunteers in the community who have been trained in victim/offender mediations. We hosted Mediation Training workshops in September, which allowed new and experienced mediators to learn about or refresh their skills in family and victim/offender mediations. With the expansion of the mediation program, we look forward to continuing to provide the community with alternative methods to dispute resolution. To volunteer with the program, please contact Rebecca Sigrist at [RebeccaS@LASSD.org](mailto:RebeccaS@LASSD.org).



## Our youngest volunteer!

Congratulations to **Marcela Guerra, Esq.**, LASSD Pro Bono Program Staff Attorney, on the birth of her daughter **Daniella** on June 19. Marcela, we wish you and your family all the best!

## Conservator Clinic News

### Recent cases

The Conservatorship Clinic continues on Tuesday afternoons at the downtown Probate Courthouse. **Curtis Bulgatz, Esq.**, successfully assisted Dee H. to obtain conservatorship for her elderly friend who suffers from Dementia and needs assistance with activities of daily living. **Keeley Luhnnow, Esq.**, successfully helped Dale & Sharon K. add co-conservators to an existing limited conservatorship of their disabled son.

### Welcome

We also welcome **Maria Kraus** who is helping **Susanne Hilles, Esq.**, at the Conservatorship Clinic.

### Pathways to Justice

**Susanne Hilles, Esq.**, LASSD Conservatorship Clinic Staff Attorney, was invited to join a panel discussion at the Pathways to Justice Conference in San Francisco in June. The panel focused on the topic "Creative Solutions to Elder Abuse Issues." Susanne spoke about our innovative Conservatorship Clinic, the first of its kind in the nation. Her presentation sparked great interest and San Francisco's Probate Court is now establishing its own Conservatorship Clinic. Well done, Susanne!

To volunteer at the clinic, contact **Susanne Hilles** at [SusanneH@LASSD.org](mailto:SusanneH@LASSD.org).

# Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome new volunteers to join us at any time. No prior experience is necessary to participate in many of these programs and many programs are open to both attorneys and non-attorneys. We offer training and support for volunteers:

- Program training available with MCLE credit
- Training materials provided
- Experienced attorneys to mentor our volunteer attorneys
- Cases are prescreened before being referred to volunteer attorneys
- Volunteers are covered by our malpractice insurance.



To participate in one of our programs, please complete and return the Volunteer Registration Form (see back page). *We look forward to hearing from you!*

## Youth & Children At Risk

- ◆ **Mediation:** Victim/Youth Offender; Family Intervention; Peer Mediation Training and Group Conferencing.
- ◆ **Education:** Representation at School Disciplinary Proceedings and Advocacy on Individual Education Plans.
- ◆ **Youth Outreach Program (YOP):** provides direct legal services to emancipated youth and youth aging out of foster care through outreach clinics in drop-in centers, soup kitchens, etc.

## **NEW!** Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic Program

Advocate for low-income taxpayers who have disputes with the Internal Revenue Service. Provide advice and representation to taxpayers trying to resolve tax controversies through the IRS internal appeals procedures or through litigation in federal court. Assist at monthly clinics and represent taxpayer-client before the IRS or in court. Training and mentoring are provided. Volunteer attorneys and certified public accountants are needed.

## Conservatorship & Guardianship

### Guardianship Clinics

Assist litigants, predominantly parents, in guardianship cases.

**Mondays 9 a.m. - 12 noon**

Room adjacent to Dept F-10

Probate Courthouse

1409 Fourth Ave., San Diego CA 92101

### Conservatorship Clinic

Pro per clinic, giving facilitator-like assistance to low-income litigants. A volunteer attorney may also provide representation to a client in a conservatorship action.

**Tuesdays 2 - 4:30 p.m.**

Room adjacent to Dept F-10

Probate Courthouse

1409 Fourth Ave., San Diego CA 92101

## Other Pro Bono Opportunities

### Economic Impact Program

Provide pro bono legal assistance on:

Corporate matters for nonprofits

High impact litigation which may make law and cause a significant improvement in the lives of our county's indigent residents.

### Immigration

Battered Spouse Immigrant Self-Petitions and Applications for Naturalization.

### Consumer Issues

Assist clients with cleaning up credit reports, rebuilding credit, license denial applications, expungement of records, advice on budgets, managing money, etc.

## Family Law

### Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Order Clinic

8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. every day

Family Law Center, 3rd Floor

South County Courthouse

500 Third Avenue, Chula Vista CA 91910

Open to attorneys and non-attorneys.

Volunteer attorneys may also provide representation in family law cases.

## Unlawful Detainer (UD) and Civil Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) Clinics

### Downtown Clinics

Hall of Justice, 330 W. Broadway, San Diego

### Civil TRO

Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. - Noon

### UD

Monday and Friday 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

### East County Clinics

East County Courthouse, Next to Dept. 1

250 East Main St., El Cajon

### Civil TRO and UD

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30 a.m. - Noon

Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 a.m. - Noon

### South County Clinics

South County Courthouse

Family Law Center, 3rd Floor

500 Third Avenue, Chula Vista CA 91910

### Civil TRO

8:30 am - 1:00 p.m. every day

## Disabled Homeless Outreach Project

Provide assistance to homeless individuals with disabilities with legal issues that might impede their path out of homelessness. Assist clients in obtaining disability-linked government benefits and advise on disability rights.

### United Methodist Church

1561 Thomas Avenue, Pacific Beach

Wednesday 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### St. Vincent de Paul's

### Villages Medical Clinic

1501 Imperial Avenue, San Diego

Monday 1 - 4 p.m.

Wednesday 9 a.m. - Noon

---

## **VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM**

Mail, fax or email your form:  
fax: (619) 471-2774  
ClareM@LASSD.org

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fax Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Languages Spoken

**FOR PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Bar Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Admitted to CA Bar

\_\_\_\_\_  
Areas of Legal Practice and Years of Experience in Each Area

Have you been involved in any disciplinary proceedings? If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of San Diego in which you are available to take cases:**

- All Areas     Central     North County     South Bay     East County

**Please indicate which areas you are interested in obtaining training and taking Pro Bono cases:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Order Clinic         | <input type="checkbox"/> Unlawful Detainer Assistance Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Law Representation                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Outreach Project                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservatorship                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation Involving Youth                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Expulsion Hearings and Special Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Impact Program/Corporate and High Impact Litigation | <input type="checkbox"/> Low-income Taxpayer Clinic           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled Homeless Project                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> All Types of Cases                   |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date