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Pro Bono Collaborative E-Newsletter (No. 4) (September 2009)

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Dear Friend of the PBC:

We have been very busy over the past several months meeting with new community partners, recruiting new law firms to join the PBC and matching law students with PBC projects.

We are thrilled to announce that two additional law firms have recently joined the PBC: Ratcliffe Harten Burke & G랄명aga LLP and Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC.

In addition to welcoming two new law firms, we launched a new special education project partnering the RI Disability Law Center with Hinckley Allen Snyder LLP in providing direct representation to families whose children are being denied special education services to which they are entitled.

We are pleased to announce that our Guardianship Project has a new partner, the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities at Bradley Hospital.

On August 27 the PBC kicked off Thirsty Thursday, a monthly cocktail gathering at McFadden’s where pro bono minded attorneys can socialize and get to know the PBC. Please join us on Thursday, November 5 at 6 p.m. at McFadden’s for our next Thirsty Thursday event.

Sincerely,

Eliza Vorenberg, J.D.
Director, Pro Bono Collaborative

Suzanne Harrington-Steppen, J.D.
Project Coordinator, Pro Bono Collaborative

News and Updates

Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics Accepts PBC Article

An article tentatively entitled: "Don't Do It Alone: A Community-Based, Collaborative Approach To Pro Bono" and co-authored by Laurie Barron, Suzanne Harrington-Steppen, Elizabeth Tobin Tyler, and Eliza Vorenberg will be published in the Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics in February 2010. The article describes the genesis and development of
the PBC as an innovative and replicable model that leverages untapped legal assistance resources and brings them to bear on tremendous unmet legal need in the community.

**Disability Law Center of RI partners with Hinckley Allen Snyder LLP on new Special Education Project**

On August 28, the Rhode Island Disability Law Center provided a Special Education Law training to attorneys from Hinckley Allen & Snyder and a RWU SOL law student. The lawyer/law student team will be working with RIDLC to provide pro bono representation to low-income families with children who have special education needs. We are very excited to be launching this project.

**Ratcliffe Harten Burke & Galamaga LLP joins the PBC to provide Expungement Workshops at McAuley House**

In October, Richard Ratcliffe, Esq. and his law firm colleagues will begin providing educational workshops and legal assistance on criminal expungement issues to clients of McAuley House. In addition to the workshops, the law firm has offered to assist McAuley Ministries, McAuley House's umbrella organization, with business law related advice and
counsel, on an as-needed basis.

**Want to Grab a Drink with Pro Bono-Minded Attorneys?**

In July, PBC Advisory Board members Matthew Plain and Liz Oliveira suggested a monthly casual cocktail gathering to showcase the PBC and get attorneys together to talk pro bono. The first "Thirsty Thursday" was held at McFadden's Bar and Grill on August 27. The next Thirsty Thursday will be held on November 5 at McFadden's from 6 pm-8 pm. Everyone is welcome!

*PBC Advisory Board members Matthew Plain, Esq. of Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman, LLP and Elizabeth Oliveira, Esq. of Nixon Peabody LLP with RWU SOL alum Max Greene ('08)*
**Nixon Peabody Expungement Project Sends Attorneys to Operation Stand Down**

On September 18, Armando Batastini, Esq. and Timothy Baldwin, Esq. from the law firm of Nixon Peabody LLP, along with RWU SOL second year law student Erik Johnson and Professor Andy Horwitz, provided pro bono advice and counsel to veterans at the 16th Annual Operation Stand Down. Nixon Peabody LLP has been providing direct representation to clients referred to the PBC Expungement Project by the RI Coalition for the Homeless and local veterans groups.
RWU Law Professor Andrew Horwitz with Nixon Peabody LLP's Armando E. Batastini, Esq, and Timothy K. Baldwin, Esq, at Operation Stand Down
Kristen Sherman, Esq. of Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C. Educates and Informs Readers One Column at Time

Since last January, Kristen Sherman, Esq., of Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C. has been working with the newspaper, Street Sights, to author a legal column that addresses issues relevant to homeless men, women and children. In August, Ms. Sherman was joined by Rebecca Carey, RWU SOL ’11. In September, Ms. Sherman authored a column addressing the criminalization of homeless individuals. You can read the column, which appears on Page 12 of the September issue of Street Sights, at http://www.streetsights.org/Sept09/StreetSightsSept09.pdf.

Get Involved: Projects Needing Law Firms

1. Special Education Compensatory Services
Partnering with RILS to assist students who have been deprived of educational rights for an extensive period and therefore are owed compensatory services to make them whole or close the educational gap.

Time Commitment: Moderate
Number of Attorneys Needed: 2
2. Children & Young Adults SSI Project
Partnering with RILS to assist individuals who have been denied critical Supplemental Security Income support (public benefits program for disabled youth and adults).

**Time Commitment: Moderate**
**Number of Attorneys Needed: 2**

3. Transactional Legal Services for Nonprofit Organizations.
The PBC receives several requests each year from nonprofit organizations serving low-income communities in need of pro bono legal assistance. Accordingly, we are always in need of attorneys with business law expertise to assist these organizations. This is an ongoing need, so please contact the PBC if you would like to be added to our list of pro bono attorneys willing to take these matters as they arise.

**Time Commitment: Moderate**
**Number of Attorneys Needed: 2**

4. Foreclosure and Bankruptcy Assistance Project
Provide desperately needed legal assistance to those on the verge of homelessness due to foreclosure. Housing Network of RI and its member are HUD certified counseling agencies that offer free counseling to Rhode Island homeowners who are at risk of losing their homes to foreclosure. Due to the current economic situation, the organization is inundated with requests for assistance and, while they are managing their caseload, they need legal assistance for people who come to them needing to file for bankruptcy and/or who have been victims of predatory lending. Housing Network RI will refer eligible homeowners they identify to the PBC project's law firm for legal assistance. In each matter, the Housing Network, through its counselors, will remain involved to support the PBC team.

**Time Commitment: Moderate**
**Number of Attorneys Needed: 2**

If your law firm is interested in any of these projects or if you would like additional information, please call Suzy Harrington-Steppen, PBC Project Coordinator, at 401.254.4559 or sharrington-steppen@rwu.edu.

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**Donate to the PBC**
The PBC needs your help. If you would like to make a financial contribution you can donate online or via mail:

**GIVE ONLINE**
*(please note your contribution is for the "PBC")*

**Please send contributions to:**
The PBC, RWU School of Law, 10 Metacom Avenue, Bristol, RI 02809

*The Pro Bono Collaborative is a grant-funded project at the Roger Williams University*
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