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## The Pro Bono Collaborative Project Spotlight 05-23-2017

Roger Williams University School of Law

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May 23, 2017



## **Project Spotlight**

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*Starting this month, the The Pro Bono Collaborative will periodically spotlight one project or issue as a way to keep our volunteers and supporters aware of and engaged in PBC projects and local access to justice initiatives.*

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Pro Bono Collaborative attorneys Dawn Euer and John Karwashan, supervised Alex Terry (2L), Shea Griffin (2L), Peter Sabian (3L), Amanda Seekins (2L) and Rebeca Tuches (3L)

## **PBC's ACI Legal Clinic Project**

In early February, Mr. B came to the Pro Bono Collaborative's civil legal clinic in the medium facility at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) in Cranston. Just before his incarceration, he had agreed to the open adoption of his infant daughter with the understanding that he would receive photos and written updates about her biannually. Mr. B hadn't received anything in the past three years and hadn't seen his daughter since she was an infant. He recalled a Family Court order but didn't have it. RWU Law 2L Shea Griffin went to work and tracked down the Family Court Order and the name and address of the adoptive family. One week before the group's last visit to the ACI, supervising attorney John Karwashan ('15) wrote to the adoptive family, enclosing the order. The morning of the last clinic, John received (by text) several pictures of Mr. B's

now 3-year-old daughter. John printed the photos and he and Shea were able to present them to Mr. B that afternoon. Mr. B was speechless for a short period of time, thumbing through the photos, and then said "thank you" over and over again.

Since 2014 when attorney Steven Miller came to the PBC with an idea to start a legal clinic inside the prison, pro bono attorneys and RWU Law students have staffed a civil legal clinic at the ACI, first in the minimum facility and now in the medium facility. The project provides a walk-in legal clinic for inmates with questions or concerns related to civil legal issues such as child support, visitation, housing, wills and consumer debt issues.

This year, six RWU Law students and two pro bono attorneys spent every other Friday afternoon from January through April in the medium facility. During each visit to the ACI, PBC attorneys Dawn Euer and John Karwashan supervised RWU Law students Alex Terry (2L), Shea Griffin (2L), Peter Sabian (3L), Amanda Seekins (2L), Rebeca Tuches (3L) and Autumn Guarnaccia (2L) as they identified inmates' civil legal issues and decided whether there was legal information or advice that could be provided and whether additional research or action was needed to assist the inmates. This year, the project worked with over 50 inmates on discrete civil legal issues ranging from child support to handwritten wills.

## **About the PBC**

The PBC staff identifies, develops and facilitates pro bono projects serving low income communities, and works to increase access to justice. The PBC is not a referral program, but instead matches law firms and law students with community organizations to provide pro bono legal assistance in a specific area of law. [Read more about the PBC...](#)

***If you are an attorney and would like to get involved in this or any other PBC project, we would love to hear from you.***

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