6-1-2010

Pro Bono Collaborative E-Newsletter (No. 6) (June 2010)

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Dear Friend of the PBC:

On May 6, 2010, at the State Lounge in downtown Providence, top lawyers, business executives and community advocates gathered to promote, strengthen and celebrate the Pro Bono Collaborative (PBC). Thanks to our generous sponsors the organization's first fundraiser raised over $25,000.

In addition to highlighting our May 6th Cocktail Party fundraiser, this edition of the PBC's E-newsletter includes news, project updates and new pro bono opportunities. Enjoy your summer!

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

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

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**News and Updates**

**2010 PBC Cocktail Party:**
The PBC's first fundraiser was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who attended and sponsored the event and we hope to see even more of you in 2011! If you missed the event here are some photos:
Attorneys from Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP including host Stephen Prignano (far right)

Host Elizabeth Oliveira, Jodi Bourque and Stump Olsen
Providence Chief of Police Dean Esserman, Aileen L. Sprague and Robert J. McConnell from Motley Rice LLP

Attorneys from Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP including host Tracy C. Baran (fourth from right)
Host Joseph Whelan from Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP addressing the crowd

Hosts Elizabeth Oliveira, Matthew Plain and Tracy Baran announcing the raffle and silent auction winners
RWU Senior Vice President Lynn Fawthrop, RI Chief Justice Paul Suttell and FILS Director Laurie Barron

Attorneys from Hinckley Allen and Snyder LLP
Feinstein Institute Staff and Dean of RWU SOL David Logan

Judge Daniel A. Procaccini, Jeffrey Biolchini, host John Roney
Richard Ratcliffe
Host Joseph Whelan and RWU President Dr. Roy Nirschel

The Raffle and silent auction
Nixon Peabody LLP Wins In-House Pro Bono Award and Makes Generous Donation to the PBC

In June, Nixon Peabody's Providence office received an award from its national office for providing more pro bono hours per attorney than any other Nixon Peabody office in the country. The local office voted to donate their award money to the PBC. On June 8 Eliza Vorenberg accepted a generous donation from law firm partner Linn Freedman, who is also a member of the RWU Law Board of Directors.

In 2009 Nixon Peabody's Providence attorneys averaged 64 hours per lawyer, together donating 970 hours to numerous pro bono matters including the Pro Bono Collaborative Youth Pride and Expungement Projects, a suit against a chief psychologist in Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib for misuse of detainee information, and preventing the eviction of homeless families from an emergency shelter, among others. Nixon Peabody LLP's pro bono policies are terrific and show a true commitment to the legal community's ethical responsibility to provide pro bono legal service. Among other things, the firm has a 60 hour yearly aspirational goal for each of its attorneys, all attorney pro bono hours are counted as billable, and leadership in pro bono hours has been a basis for yearly bonus calculations.
Sang Hwa Lee and Ashley Ham Pong Receive 2010 PBC Awards

At the Feinstein Institute’s year-end Thank You Reception on April 29, PBC Director Eliza Vorenberg presented the annual awards for “professionalism, collaborative spirit, and exemplary commitment to serving the community and promoting justice for the underrepresented through the PBC” to 3L Sang Hwa Lee for his work with Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C. on the Tax Advocacy Project and to 3L Ashley Ham Pong for her work with Nixon Peabody LLP on the Youth Pride Project.
Sang Hwa Lee,'10, Eliza Vorenberg and Ashley Ham Pong '10 at graduation.

**Foreclosure Scam Prevention Project:**
On April 7 the PBC’s Foreclosure Prevention Scam Project, which includes Bob McConnell, Esq. of Motley Rice LLC and RWUSOL 2Ls Jeff Basting and Shad Miller attended the launching of the Loan Modification Scam Alert Campaign at the State House. This new project partners Motley Rice LLC with Housing Network RI to provide legal assistance to homeowner victims of these scams.

Shad Miller, Ray Neirinckx, RI Housing Resource
U Visa Project Up and Running!
On February 11, 2010, the PBC provided a U-Visa Training and launched the PBC’s U Visa Project with immigration attorney Joan Mathieu and Catholic Social Services of Fall River. The project has already received two U Visa referrals. The pro bono legal assistance provided through the project will assist immigrants who have been victims of crime.

Get Involved: Projects Needing Law Firms

1. Guardian Advocate Project with Looking Upwards
Partnering with Looking Upwards, a nonprofit agency that provides an array of services to children and adults with developmental disabilities, to provide legal counsel to nine developmentally disabled adults regarding financial and medical decision making.
options. In some cases, guardianship petitions may be filed.

**Time Commitment: Moderate** (9 discrete cases; potential for additional work if interested)

**Number of Attorneys Needed: 2**

2. **Advice & Counsel for Tenants in Foreclosed Properties Project**
Partnering with the *RI Bank-Owned Tenants and Homeowners Association* to provide advice and counsel to tenants of properties that have recently been foreclosed. Twice a month, on Thursday late afternoons, attorneys and law students would attend Association meetings to answer members' legal questions and provide advice and counsel. Legal problems could range from inability to recoup a security deposit or rent paid after a foreclosure sale to utility shut-offs during foreclosure sale. Attorneys’ role would be to inform the tenant of their legal entitlements and provide advice on how to self-advocate. Attorneys could also negotiate to permit the tenant to stay in the home or get adequate time and money to move.

**Time Commitment: Moderate**

**Number of Attorneys Needed: 2**

3. **Homeless Disability Project with SOAR (great for aspiring litigators!)**
The project will partner SOAR ("SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery") and the RI Disability Law Center with a law firm and RWU law students in handling pro bono Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) Administrative Law Judge hearings. This PBC project will involve helping homeless individuals with mental illness obtain SSI benefits they desperately need, and are entitled to, but have not been able to obtain. The staff at SOAR currently assists individuals in their initial applications and prepares all the necessary medical documentation. However, in cases where the benefits are denied, a hearing may be requested. PBC project attorneys would assist at this stage of the process by filing a Request for Hearing, and then preparing for and providing representation at the hearing. It usually takes about seven months from when a Request for Hearing is made until the hearing.

**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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**PBC's Current Pro Bono Projects:**

**Special Education Advocacy Projects:**

- Meeting Street School, Casey Family Services and Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP
- RI Disability Law Center and Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP

**Housing Rights Clinic Projects:**

- Children's Friend & Service RI and Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP
- Women's Center RI and Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP

**Expungement Projects:**

- Family Life Center, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Operation Stand Down and Nixon Peabody LLP
- McAuley House and Ratcliffe Harten Burke & Galamaga LLP

**Nonprofit Incorporation Projects:**

- Grand Divas: Casey Family Services' kinship care group and Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP;
- Rhode Island Liberian Foundation for Education and Cultural Initiatives (RILFECI) and Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP; and
- Dream Center and Pannone Lopes Devereaux & West LLC

**Monthly Legal Column in Street Sights Newspaper Project:**
(serving homeless community and advocates) Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C.

**Guardianship Project**
: Bradley Hospital's Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities and Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman LLP

**U Visa Project with Joan Matheau, Esq. and Catholic Social Services**

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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 Pro Bono Collaborative is a grant-funded project at the Roger Williams University School of Law, a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit institution. All contributions to the PBC are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

2010 Pro Bono Collaborative Event Sponsors:

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Joseph and Cathleen Whelan
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Lexis Nexis
David A. Logan
Stephen and Cheryl Prignano
Taylor Duane Barton & Gilman LLP

**PBC Ally - $500**
Allied Court Reporters, Inc.
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Laurie Barron and Michael Yelnosky
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